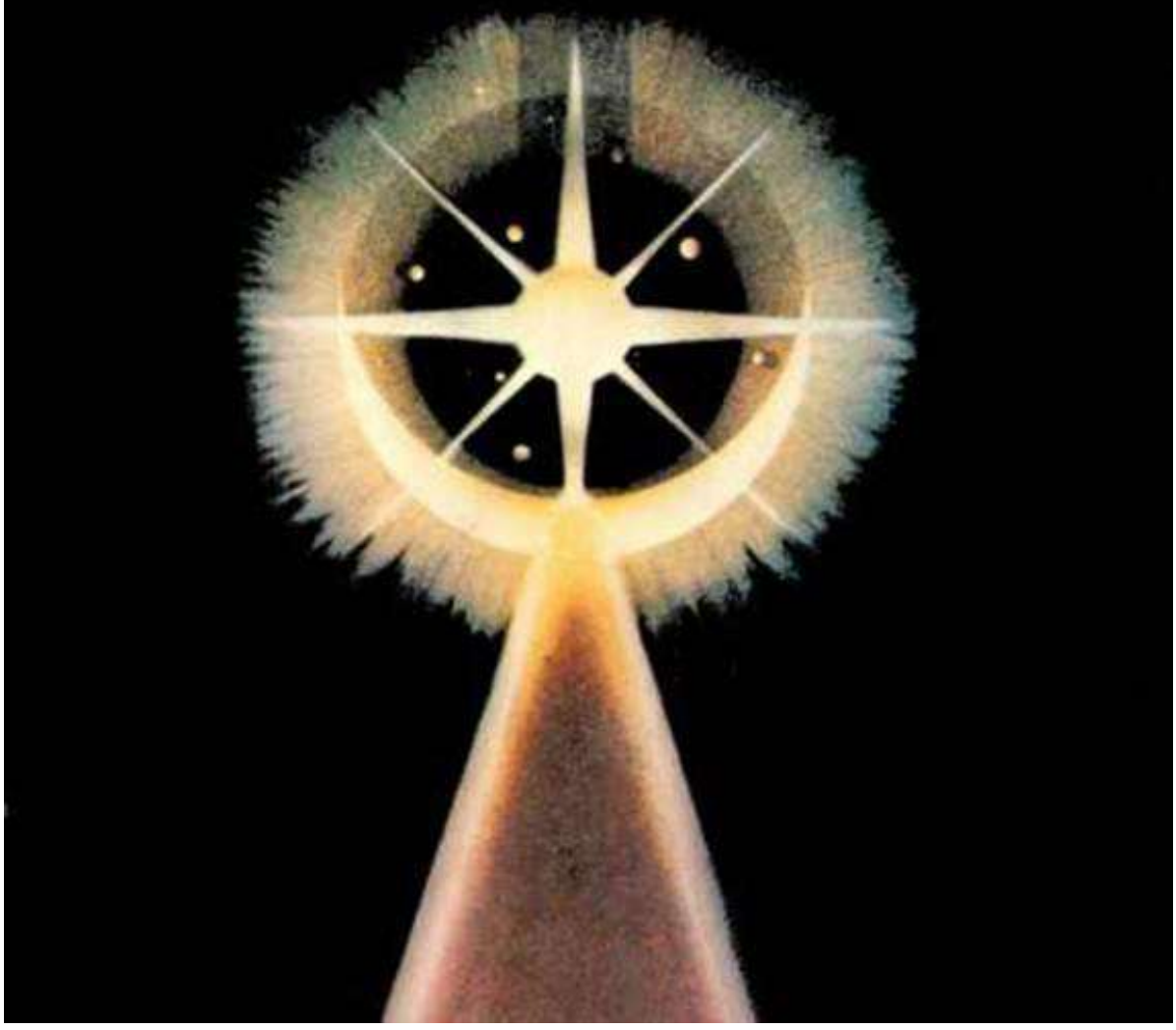
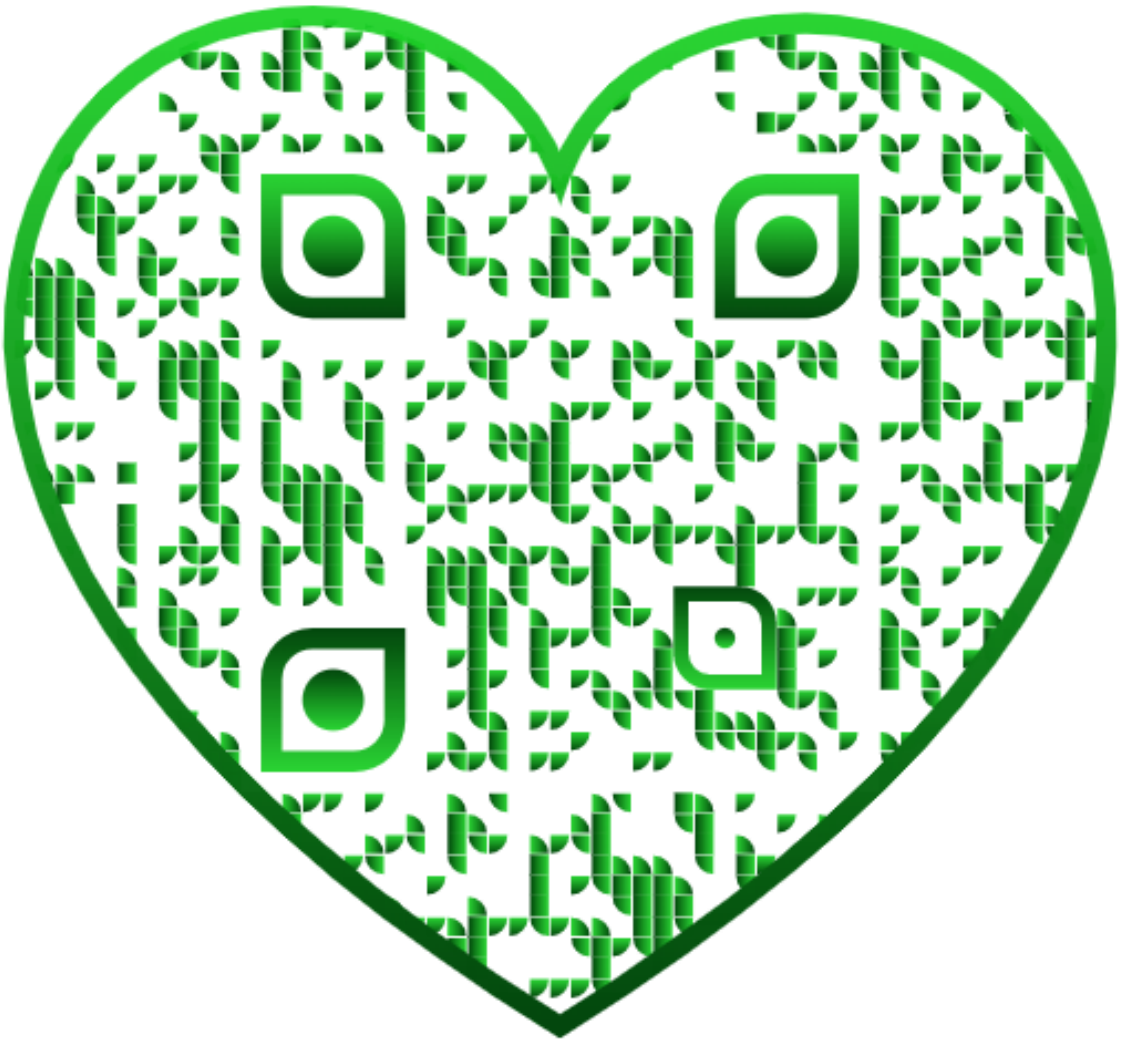
THE SATURN MYTH

A reinterpretation of rites and symbols illuminating some of the dark corners of primordial society

DAVID N. TALBOTT





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I: Introduction

The planet Saturn today is recognizable only to those who know where to look for it. But a few thousand years ago Saturn dominated the earth as a sun, presiding over a universal Golden Age.

Modern man considers it self-evident that our familiar heavens differ hardly at all from the heavens encountered by the earliest star worshippers. He assumes that the most distinctive bodies venerated in primitive times were the sun and moon, followed by the five visible planets and various constellations—all appearing as they do today, but for such ever-so-slight changes as the precession of the equinoxes.

This long-standing belief not only confines present discussion of ancient myth and religion; it is the fixed doctrine of modern astronomy and geology: every prevailing theory of the solar system and of earth's past rests upon an underlying doctrine of cosmic uniformity—the belief that the clocklike regularity of heavenly motions can be projected backward indefinitely.

But the evidence assembled in the following pages indicates that *within human memory* extraordinary changes in the planetary system occurred: in the earliest age recalled by man the planet Saturn was the most spectacular light in the heavens and its impact on the ancient world overwhelming. In fact Saturn was the one "great god" invoked by all mankind. The first religious symbols were symbols of Saturn, and so pervasive was the planet god's influence that the ancients knew him as the creator, the king of the world, and Adam, the first man.

Since the only meaningful defense of this claim is the entire body of evidence presented here, I shall not presume upon the reader's credulity, but only ask that he follow the narrative to its end.

Myth And Catastrophe

If our generation disdains the possibility of fact in the language of myth it is because we are aware of discrepancy between myth and the modern world view, and we ascribe it to the blindness or superstition of the ancients. There is hardly an ancient tale which fails to speak of world-destroying upheavals and shifting cosmic orders. Indeed, we are so accustomed to the catastrophic character of the stories that we hardly give it a second thought. When the myths tell of suns which have come and gone, or of planetary gods whose wars threatened to destroy mankind, we are likely to take them as amusing and absurdly exaggerated accounts of local floods, earthquakes, and eclipses—or write them off altogether as expressions of unconstrained fancy. How many scholars, seeking to unravel the astronomical legends and symbols of antiquity, have questioned whether the heavenly bodies have always coursed on the same paths they follow today? In the past three hundred years barely a handful of writers have claimed any connection between myth and actual celestial catastrophe:

William Whiston published in 1696 *A New Theory of the Earth*, arguing that the biblical Deluge resulted from a cometary cataclysm. The book produced a storm of scientific objections and had no lasting impact outside Christian orthodoxy.

In 1882 and 1883 two books by Ignatius Donnelly appeared: *Atlantis, the Antediluvian World*, and *Ragnarok: the Age of Fire and Gravel.* Relying on global myths, Donnelly claimed that a massive continent called Atlantis once harboured a primordial civilization, but the entire land sank beneath the sea when a comet rained destruction on the earth. Both of Donnelly's books became best sellers and are still available today. Yet conventional theories of earth and the solar system remain unaffected by these works.

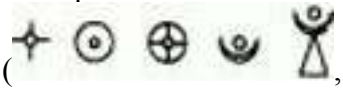
Around the turn of the century Isaac Vail argued in a series of brief papers that myths of cosmic upheaval relate to the collapse of ice bands surrounding our planet.[1] Three quarters of a century after his death, his work is familiar only to the esoteric few.

In 1913 Hans Hoerbiger published his *Glacial-Kosmogonie*, contending that the great catastrophes described in ancient myth occurred when the Earth captured another planet which became our moon.[2] The relatively small interest in Hoerbiger's thesis vanished within a couple of decades.

This was the extent of noteworthy research into myth and catastrophe when Immanuel Velikovsky, in early 1940, first wondered whether a cosmic disturbance may have accompanied the Hebrew Exodus. According to the biblical account, massive plagues occurred, Sinai erupted, and a pillar of cloud and fire moved in the sky. His quest for a solution led Velikovsky through a systematic survey of world mythology and eventually to the conclusion that ancient myths constitute a collective memory of celestial disorder. The great gods, Velikovsky observed, appear explicitly as planets. In the titanic wars vividly depicted by ancient chroniclers the planets moved on erratic courses, appearing to wage battles in the sky, exchanging electrical discharges, and more than once menacing the earth.

Velikovsky set forth his claims of celestial catastrophe in his book *Worlds in Collision* (published in 1950), proposing that first Venus and then Mars, in the period 1500-686 B.C., so disturbed the Earth's axis as to produce world-wide destruction. The book became an immediate best seller and the focus of one of the great scientific controversies of this century.[3]

I mention Velikovsky not only because his work obviously relates to the thesis of this book, but because, as a matter of record, Velikovsky first directed my attention toward Saturn. In a manuscript still awaiting publication Velikovsky proposed that the now-distant planet was once the dominant heavenly body, and he identified Saturn's epoch with the legendary Golden Age. While I have not seen Velikovsky's unpublished manuscript on Saturn, a brief outline of his idea inspired the present inquiry: was Saturn once the preeminent light in the heavens?

Yet I possessed at the outset no conception of the broad thesis presented here—which fell into place with surprising rapidity, once I set out to reconstruct the Saturn myth. While expecting to find, at best, only faint echoes of Saturn (or no hint at all), I found instead that the ancients, looking back to "the beginnings," were obsessed with the planet-god and strove in a thousand ways to relive Saturn's epoch. The most common symbols of antiquity, which our age universally regards as *solar* emblems ( , etc.) were originally unrelated to our sun. *They were literal pictures of Saturn*, whom the entire ancient world invoked as "the sun." In the original age to which the myths refer, Saturn was no remote speck faintly discerned by terrestrial observers; the planet loomed as an awesome and terrifying light. And if we are to believe the wide-spread accounts of Saturn's age, the planet-god's home was the unmoving celestial pole, the apparent pivot of the heavens, far removed from the visible path of Saturn today.

At first glance, however, the Saturn myth seems to present an entanglement of bizarre images. The earliest, most venerated religious texts depict the great god sailing in a celestial ship, consorting with winged goddesses, fashioning revolving islands, cities and temples, or abiding upon the shoulders of a cosmic giant. It is impossible to pursue Saturn's ancient image without encountering the paradise of Eden, the lost Atlantis, the fountain of youth, the one-wheeled "chariot of the gods," the all-seeing Eye of heaven, or the serpent-dragon of the deep. Though celebrated as living, *visible* powers, none of Saturn's personifications or mythical habitats

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1 A number of Vail's papers have been collected and published by Donald Cyr, Annular Publications, 25 West Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, California.

2 A general and less-than-convincing survey of mythological evidence will be found in H. S. Bellamy, *Moons, Myths and Man.*

3 This is not the place to recount the details of the "Velikovsky affair" or to recite the many unexpected space age discoveries weighing in Velikovsky's favor. The story receives comprehensive coverage in the recent book *Velikovsky Reconsidered*, a series of papers by scholars acknowledging substantial scientific evidence in support of Velikovsky's claims.

conforms to anything in our familiar world. Yet once one seeks out the concrete nature of these images, it becomes clear that each referred to the *same celestial form.* The subject is a Saturnian configuration of startling simplicity—whose appearance, transformation, and eventual disappearance became the focus of all ancient rites.

I now have little doubt that, if Velikovsky had pursued the Saturn question to the end, he would have perceived a vastly greater influence of the planet than he originally recognized. He would have discovered also that the full story of Saturn adds a new perspective to much of the mythological material gathered in *Worlds in Collision.* (In this connection I must stress that I alone am responsible for the themes and conclusions presented in this book. Realizing that Velikovsky has had to defend his own heresy for better than a quarter of a century, I have no desire to burden him with the heresy of others.)

Nothing came as a greater surprise to me than the sheer quantity of material bearing directly on the Saturn tradition. The scope of the subject matter made it necessary to separate the material into two volumes: the first dealing with the original Saturnian apparition, the second with Saturn's catastrophic fate. This initial volume then, focuses on the primordial age of cosmic harmony and the unified image of Saturn as king of the world.

II: The Great Father

Anyone attempting to trace the Saturn legend must reckon with the primordial god-figure whom ancient races celebrate as "the great father," and who is said to have first organized the heavens and founded the antediluvian kingdom of peace and plenty, the "Golden Age." While few of us today could locate Saturn in the starry sphere, the earliest astral religions insist that the planet-god was once the all-powerful ruler of heaven. But paradoxically, they also declare that he *resided on earth* as a great king. He was the father both of gods and men.

This dual character of the great father has been the subject of a centuries-long, but unresolved debate. Was he a living ancestor subsequently exaggerated into a cosmic divinity? Or was he originally a celestial god whom later myths reduced to human proportions? For an explanation of the great father researchers look to such varied powers as the solar orb, an esteemed tribal chief, or an abstract "vegetation cycle." Almost uniformly ignored is the connection of the primordial man-god with the actual planet Saturn—even though it is precisely the latter that can tell us why the great father appears in both human and celestial form.

The overwhelming preoccupation of ancient ritual is with an ancient "great god":

1. The myths say that the god emerged alone from the cosmic sea as the preeminent power in the heavens. Out of watery chaos he produced a new order. The ancients worshipped him as the creator and the supreme lord of the Cosmos.

2. This solitary god, according to the legend, founded a kingdom of unparalleled splendour. He was the divine ancestor of all earthly rulers, his kingdom the prototype of the just and prosperous realm. Throughout his reign an unending spring prevailed, the land produced freely, and men knew neither labour nor war.

3. In the god-king's towering form the ancients perceived the Heaven Man, a primordial giant whose body was the newly organized Cosmos. The legends often present the figure as the first man or "primordial man," whose history personified the struggle of good and evil.

4. Whether emphasizing the great father's character as creator, first king, or Heaven Man, widespread traditions proclaim him to be the planet Saturn.

In investigating the traits of the archaic god we must give greatest weight to the oldest astral religions—those which are closest to the original experience. The best material, coming from ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, provides a remarkably coherent picture of the god and enables one to see the development and the distortions of the idea among later peoples. What is most surprising, however, is the enduring power of the root themes.

The "One God" Of Archaic Monotheism

In the beginning the ancients knew one supreme god only, a divinity invoked as the creator and the father of all the gods.

According to a long-established school of thought, man's consciousness of a supreme being emerged slowly from a primitive fascination with petty spirits and demons. Adherents to this opinion tell us that human reason gradually modified capricious spirits of "vegetation," "spring," "the ancestors," or "sexual power" into the great gods of global religion.

Of such an *evolutionary* process, however, one finds little evidence. The great edifices erected by Herbert Spencer, E.B. Tylor, and James G. Frazer[4] appear to rest exclusively on the assumption that one can learn the origins of theism by studying existing primitive cultures. The idea is that the civilized races of old must have first passed through "primitive" phases. Before the Hebrews, Greeks, or Hindus developed their elevated ideas of a supreme god, they must have possessed beliefs and customs similar to those of modern-day tribes of Africa, Australia, or Polynesia. Only by *slow development*, say these theorists, could a race rise above the ludicrous magic, totems, and fetishes of the savage.

It is interesting that the advocates of the various evolutionary theories, in their fascination with present-day primitive cultures, almost never concern themselves with the oldest religious texts and symbols which have come down to us. The sacred hymns and eulogies of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia reveal a tradition of a "great god" reaching back into prehistoric times. Moreover, a comparison of early and later sources, rather than suggesting a development, actually indicates the *disintegration* of a once-unified idea into magic, astrology, totemism, and other elements with which the evolutionists associate the "first stages" of religion.

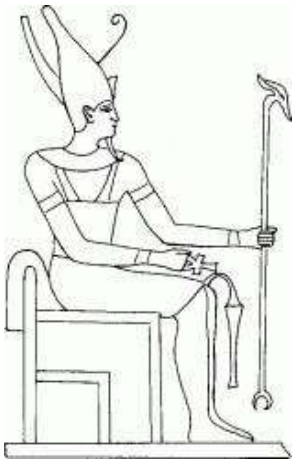

Figure 1. Atum, the solitary god of beginnings.

There are grounds for speaking of an archaic monotheism, astral in nature, existing long before the idea of God received its spiritual and philosophical elevation in Hebrew and Greek thought. To the ancients themselves the entire question was simply a matter of concrete history: the present world is a fragmented copy of an earlier age, in which the supreme light god stood alone in a primeval sea, occupying the cosmic centre.

Ancient Egyptian texts repeatedly invoke a singular figure worshipped as the greatest and highest light of the primeval age. One of his many names was Atum, a god "born in the Abyss before the sky existed, before the earth existed."[5] These are the words of the *Pyramid Texts*, perhaps the world's oldest religious hymns, but the texts of all periods look back to the same primordial time when Atum shone forth alone. "I came into being of myself in the midst of the Primeval Waters," states the god in the *Book of the Dead*.[6] More than once the *Coffin Texts* recall the time when Atum "was alone, before he had repeated himself."[7] He "was alone in the

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4 Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*; Tylor, *Primitive Culture and Researches into the Early History of Mankind*; Frazer, *The Golden Bough*.

In 1934 E.A. Wallis Budge published his *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, whose very title indicates the influence of the evolutionary theory on specialists. Budge writes (p.56): "Animism must have preceded the magical cults of the predynastic Egyptians, and it, in its turn, was succeeded by the cults of animals, birds, reptiles, trees, etc., which after animism formed the predominant part of the later religion of the Egyptians. The great merit and fact that it embraced a qualified totemism and fetishism and prepared the way for the higher classes of spirits to become 'gods.'" Yet one looks in vain for evidence of this assumed evolution among the Egyptians.

5 *Pyramid Text* 1040.

6 Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, 40, from Chapter 85 of the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*.

7 Clark, *op. cit.*, 94.

Primeval Waters," they say.[8] "I was [the spirit in?] the Primeval Waters, he who had no companion when my name came into existence."[9]

Each locality in Egypt appears to have possessed its own special representative of the father god.[10] To some he was Horus, "the god who came first into being when no other god had yet come into existence, when no name of anything had yet been proclaimed."[11] Other traditions knew him as Re, "the God One who came into being in the beginning of time . . . O thou who didst give Thyself birth! O one, mighty one of myriad forms and aspects, king of the world . . ."[12]

The followers of Amen proclaimed their god "the Ancient of Heaven . . . , father of the gods."[13] Ptah was "the splendid god who existed alone in the beginning."[14]

The different local names of the primeval deity, though adding complexity to Egyptian religion as a whole, do not cloud the underlying idea. He is the "god One," the "Only One," the "father of beginnings," the "Supreme Lord," the singular god "except whom at the beginning none other existed."[15]

Surveying Egyptian religion one cannot fail to notice the priests' obsession with the past—and their vivid portrait of the great god in his "first appearance." Those who look for an unseen creator in early Egyptian religion will be disappointed. He is a visible and concrete power, the "lord of terror," or "the great of terror."[16] The memory of this solitary light god and creator was as old as the most ancient Egyptian ritual. His appearance—and eventual departure—shaped every aspect of the Egyptian world view.

So also in Mesopotamia, about which Stephen Langdon raises the question of archaic monotheism. After prolonged study of Semitic and Sumerian sources, Langdon concludes that veneration of spirits and demons had nothing to do with the origins of Mesopotamian religion. Rather, "both in Sumerian and Semitic religions, monotheism preceded polytheism and belief in good and evil spirits."[17]

Langdon notes that on the pictographic tablets of the prehistoric period, the picture of a star repeatedly appears. The sign , he claims, is virtually the only religious symbol in the primitive period, and in the early Sumerian language this star symbol is the ideogram for writing "god," "high," "heaven," and "bright." It is also the ideogram of An, the oldest and loftiest of the Sumerian gods.

An (or Anu) was the father of the gods and the central light at the universe summit, a god of "terrifying splendour" who governed heaven from his throne in the cosmic sea Apsu.

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8 *Ibid.*, 95.

9 *Ibid.*, 74. Elsewhere the texts employ the phrases "while he was still alone," (77), "when I [Atum] was still alone in the waters . . . " (38).

10 Muller observes, for example, that within the capital of each of the forty-two nomes, the original patron god was extolled "as though he was the only god or was at least the supreme divinity." *Egyptian Mythology*, 17-18.

11 Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 37.

12 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Introductory Hymn to Re.

13 Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, 80.

14 Ptah is "le dieu splendide qui existait tout seul au commencement. Il n'y a pas son pareil, celui qui s'est créé au commencement sans avoir ni père ni mère. Il a façonné son corps tout seul, celui qui a créé sans être créé, celui qui porte le ciel comme le travail de ses mains." Hassan, *Hymnes Religieux du Moyen Empire*, 160-61.

15 Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol. I, 131 ff., 400, 501: also Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, 4-5, 138-39.

16 Hassan, *op cit.*, 24, 27; Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 14.

17 Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, xviii.

But the Sumero-Babylonian pantheon is filled with competing figures of the primordial creator. Enki (or Ea), Ningirsu, Ninurta, Tammuz—each appears as a local formulation of the same great god.[18] Each shares in the character of the singular An, ruling as universal lord, fashioning his home above and radiating light in the midst of the celestial ocean.

Here, as in Egypt, the god of archaic monotheism is not a transcendent spirit or invisible power, but a central light. A Sumerian epic to Ninurta proclaims, "Anu in the midst of Heaven gave him fearful splendour." Ninurta, according to the text, is "like Anu," and casts "a shadow of glory over the land."[19] All Mesopotamian figures of the primeval god possess this tangible character, and accounts of the god's radiant appearance are more of a historical than a speculative nature.

Egyptian and Mesopotamian traditions of the solitary creator find many parallels in later Hebrew, Greek, Persian, Hindu, and Chinese mysticism and philosophy. But it is the earlier imagery which illuminates the later. And however unorthodox the idea may seem, the oldest records treat the great god's birth in the deep and his acts of "creation" as events experienced by the ancestors. "Hearts were pervaded with fear, hearts were pervaded with terror when I was born in the abyss," proclaims the god in the *Pyramid Texts*.[20] The solitary god, in the presence of the ancestors, brought forth the primeval world or "earth." To understand the great god's creation one must put aside modern philosophical and religious conceptions. The tradition has nothing to do with the origins of our planet or of the material universe. *The subject of the original creation legend is the formation of the great god's visible dwelling above.* The legend records that when the creator rose from the cosmic sea a great band or revolving island congealed around the god as his home. The band appeared as a well-defined, organized, and geometrically unified dwelling—a celestial "land" fashioned by the great father. All space outside this enclosure belonged to unorganized Chaos.

In a later section of this book I intend to show that ancient races the world over recorded *pictures* of the great god and his circular abode. The images were and (the second, more complete form showing streams of light radiating from the god to animate his "city of heaven"). The words which in the ancient languages denote this enclosure receive various translations as "heaven," "cosmos," "world," "land," "earth," "netherland"—terms which take on vastly different meanings in modern usage. In their *original* sense the words signified one and the same thing: a band of light which appeared to set apart the "sacred ground" of the great god from the rest of space.

(One cannot begin a survey of the great father without confronting his celestial enclosure, but a full discussion of this dwelling will be possible only after certain other aspects of the single god receive clarification. I mention the enclosure now in order to indicate the general, and unconventional, direction of this investigation. When texts cited in the following pages employ the terms "heaven," "earth," or "world" the reader should know that the usual interpretation will not be my interpretation.)

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18 *Ibid.*, 93. "Les épithètes laudatives insisteront sur son caractère de dieu des cieux, père des cieux, et surtout de roi des cieux. Il trône au sommet de la voûte céleste." Dhorme, *Les Religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie*, 23.

19 The iconography of such dieties, states Frankfort, reveals a single underlying idea. *Op. cit.*, 282. According to Van Dijk, "les différents dieux des panthéons locaux sont les 'Erscheinungsformen'—des formes pluralistes—d'une même divinité." "Le Motif Cosmique dans la Pensée Sumérienne," 4.

But Jeremias in his discussion of these "monotheistic streams" described the supreme god as an "invisible divine power." It is difficult to imagine a less appropriate description of An or any of his representative deities. In the texts An is not only the "light of the gods," but a light of "terrifying glory." Alfred Jeremias, *Handbuch der Altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, 227. Also Jeremias, *Monotheistische Strömungen . . .*

If only one god prevailed in the beginning, how did the Sumero-Babylonian religion acquire its almost endless number of deities? Langdon writes: "By giving special names to the functions of each deity [or representative of An] the theologians obtained an enormous pantheon, and by assigning special functions of the three great gods to their sons, and again giving special names to their functions the parent tree became a forest of gods and minor deities." *Op. cit.*, 91.

20 Langdon, *op. cit.*, 124.

Of the Egyptian Atum (or Re) I note these special characteristics:

1. Primeval Unity. Atum is the "One," but also the "All." Though he is the solitary god of beginnings, an assembly of lesser gods emanate from him and revolve in his company. These secondary deities, the *paut* or "circle" of the gods, constitute Atum's own "limbs." Atum's body is the primeval Cosmos,21 denoted by the circle in the sign .

2. Regulator. Atum is the stationary god, the "Firm Heart of the Sky." His hieroglyph, however, is the primitive sledge , signifying "to move." As the central light or pivot, he imparts motion to (or "moves") the heavens, while he himself remains *em hetep*, "at rest." Directing the celestial motions (and the related cycles) he becomes the god of Time.22

3. The Word. The Egyptians recall Atum as the ancient Voice of heaven:

The Word came into being.

All things were mine when I was alone.

I was Re [=Atum] *in his first manifestations.*

The texts describe the god's "first manifestations"23 as the bringing forth of his companions (his "limbs"), which issue—or explode—from the god as his fiery "speech." This circle of secondary divinities receives the name Khu, meaning "words of power," but also "brilliant lights" or "glorious lights."

4. Water God. A well-known chapter of the *Book of the Dead* includes this description of Re:

I am the Great God who created himself.

Who is he?

The Great God who created himself is the water

*it is the Abyss, the Father of the Gods.*24

The great god and the celestial ocean—"a lake of fire"—are fundamentally one. The waters issue from the god yet, paradoxically, give birth to him.

5. The Seed. Atum is the masculine power of heaven, the luminous Seed embodying all the elements of life (water, fire, air, etc.), which flow from him in streams of light. He is the universal source of fertility animating and impregnating the Cosmos.25

What is most compelling about the portrait of Atum-Re is that numerous Egyptian divinities *duplicate* the image. The very traits of the great god, outlined above, are endlessly repeated in the figures of Osiris, Ptah, Horus, Khepera, and Amen—each of whom appears as the solitary god in the fiery sea; the god One who brought forth the company of gods as his own limbs; the god of the reverberating speech; the *unmoving* god producing the celestial revolutions; the final source of waters and the impregnating Seed of the Cosmos.26

If we were to inquire of an Egyptian priest how he arrived at this notion of the supreme god, the priest would tell us that he did not "arrive" at the idea at all. The great god was a *historical* divinity, who ruled heaven for a

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21 *Pyramid Texts* 1039-40.

22 See especially the section on "The Circle of the Gods".

23 See the discussion of the Egyptian "Unmoved Mover".

24 Clark, *op. cit.*, 79.

25 Piankoff, *The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 121.

26 See the section on the cosmic womb.

time, then departed amid great upheavals. The hymns and ritual texts (the priest would say) simply record the incarnation of the god in the primordial era and recount the massive cataclysms which accompanied the collapse of that era.

As the following sections will show, the general tradition is global and highly coherent.

The Universal Monarch

The same cosmic figure whom the oldest races knew as the creator and supreme god appears in the myths as a terrestrial king, reigning over the Golden Age. His rule was distinguished for its peace and abundance, and he governed not one land alone but the entire world, becoming the model of the good king. Every terrestrial ruler, according to the kingship rites, received his charisma and authority from this divine predecessor.

No mythical figure remains more enigmatic than the great king to whom so many ancient peoples traced their ancestry. Who was Osiris, the legendary ruler who led the Egyptians out of barbarianism and reigned as king of the entire world? Who was Enki, whom the ancient Sumerians revered as the "universal lord" and founder of civilization?

The same figure appears repeatedly as one passes to India, Greece, China, and the Americas. For the Hindus it was Yama; for the Greeks, Kronos; for the Chinese, Huang-ti. The Mexicans insisted that the white god Quetzalcoatl once ruled not only Mexico but all mankind. In North America the same idea attached to the primordial figure Manabozo.

So vivid are the recollections of the Universal Monarch that his story usually forms the first chapter in the chronicles of kingship. And the kingship rites meticulously preserve a memory of the god-kings rule. Each stage in the inauguration of a new king reenacts the "first" king's life and death. The rites take the initiated back to the beginning—to the mythical "creation."

An extraordinary theme emerges: In the original age of cosmic harmony and human innocence the gods dwelt on earth. Presiding over the epoch of peace and plenty was the Universal Monarch, who founded temples and cities and taught humanity the principles of agriculture, law, writing, music, and other civilized arts. This Golden Age, however, ended in the god-king's catastrophic death.

What is most puzzling to modern commentators is that the king of the world, "ruling on earth," is at the same time the creator, the "god One." How did the ancients come upon this paradoxical notion?

The Age Of Kronos

Greek legends recall a remote and mysterious era of Kronos, the creator god who, wielding his sickle, ruled from the summit of Olympus. Eventually displaced by his own son, against whom he warred violently, Kronos seems to have appeared to the Greeks as a split personality, at once a radiant god—the very author of the world—and a dark, demonic power.

But in an old tradition, with roots in earliest antiquity, Kronos is preeminently the good king, his darker side concealed. "First of all the deathless gods who dwell on Olympus made a golden race of mortal men who lived in the time of Kronos when he was reigning in heaven. And they lived like gods without sorrow of heart, remote and free from toil and grief: miserable age rested not on them . . . The fruitful earth unforced bare them fruit abundantly and without stint. They dwelt in ease and peace upon their lands with many good things, rich in flocks and loved by the blessed gods."[27]

When Hesiod wrote these lines the Golden Age of Kronos was but a faint and often confused memory. To observe the antiquity of the idea one need only refer to the cradles of ancient civilization—Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Among the Egyptians the father of the paradisal age possessed many names, but each tradition proclaimed the same original excellence of creation, subsequently corrupted. The peaceful epoch was distinctly the age of

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27 Evelyn-White, *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, 11.

Kronos, under a different title. "Throughout their history the Egyptians believed in a time of perfection at the beginning of the world," observes Clark.28

In the earliest age, say the Egyptian sources, the great god was the first king, a ruler whose life served as a model for all succeeding ages. With the god-king Osiris the Egyptians constantly associated a vanished Golden Age. As king, Osiris, the "Beneficent Being," taught his subjects to worship the gods, gave them the arts of civilization, and formulated the laws of justice. Founding sacred temples and cities and disseminating wisdom from one land to another, he became the benefactor of the whole world.29 But his eventual murder brought world-wide destruction.

Among classical writers (Herodotus, Diodorus, Plutarch) the idea prevailed that Osiris lived on our earth as a man or man-god. Egyptian sources, too, often portray him in human form. Yet the early religious texts say again and again that Osiris was the supreme light of heaven, ruling from the cosmic centre. He was, in fact, "the lord of the gods, god One."30 His body formed the Circle of the *Tuat*, the celestial residence of the gods. And the secondary gods themselves constituted the limbs of Osiris.31

Indeed, the traditions of Osiris melt into those of Re, the "god One, who came into being in primeval time." Just as Osiris' followers remembered his rule on earth, so did other Egyptians recall the terrestrial reign of the Creator Re. To this age, states Lenormant, the Egyptians "continually looked back with regret and envy." To declare the superiority of one thing above all other things imaginable, it was enough to affirm, "its like had never been seen since the days of Re."32

Re, the father of the gods, reigned over the terrestrial world, but wandered away when the heavens fell into disorder. "All chronological tradition affirms that Re had once ruled over Egypt," writes Budge, "and it is a remarkable fact that every possessor of the throne of Egypt was proved by some means or other to have the blood of Re flowing in his veins . . ."33 But the same belief applied to Horus, the god-king *par excellence*, as well as Atum, Khepera, Ptah, and Amen. The fact which must be explained is that the memory of the creator-king and his original age of abundance was far broader than any *local* tradition.

And the story was not limited to Egypt. According to the theologian and historian Eusebius (who relates the account of the Babylonian priest-historian Berossus), the ancient tribes of Chaldea owed their civilization to a powerful and benevolent figure named Oannes, who ruled before the Deluge. Prior to Oannes, the tribes lived "without order, like the beasts." But the new god-king, who *issued from the sea*, instructed mankind in writing and various arts, the formation of cities, and the founding of temples. "He also taught them the use of laws, of bounds and divisions, also the harvesting of grains and fruits, and in short all that pertains to the mollifying of life he delivered to men; and since that time nothing more has been invented by anybody."34

Oannes was simply the Greek name for the Babylonian Ea (the Sumerian Enki), worshipped in the city of Eridu at the mouth of the Euphrates. The tradition dates to the earliest stage of Sumerian history, a time when the myths say that Enki and his wife Damkina governed the lost paradise of Dilmun, the "pure place" of man's genesis.

They alone reposed in Dilmun;

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28 *Op. cit.*, 103.

29 Budge, *Osiris; the Egyptian Religion of Resurrection*, 1-23.

30 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 131.

31 Of Osiris Budge writes, "His Body formed the circle of the Tuat . . . Osiris enshrined within himself all the cosmic gods or gods of nature." *From Fetish to God*, 183.

32 *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, 58.

33 *Gods*, Vol. I, 329.

34 Quoted in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. I, Part 2, 102.

Where Enki and his wife reposed,

That place was pure, that place was clean . . .

In Dilmun the raven croaked not.

The kite shrieked not kite-like.

The lion mangled not.

*The wolf ravaged not the lambs.*35

The inhabitants of this paradise lived in a state of near perfection, drinking the waters of life and enjoying unbounded prosperity.

Ruling over this favoured domain, Enki introduced civilization to mankind, founded the first cities and temples, and set down the first laws.

If, in the account of Berossus, the bringer of civilization appears as a man (or part man, part fish), the earlier accounts call him the creator. His home was the cosmic sea Apsu, the celestial waters of "fire, rage, splendour and terror."36 The priests of Ea or Enki deemed him *Mummu*, the creative "Word." Like the Egyptian creator, Enki brought forth the secondary gods through his own speech.

Diverse localities worshipped the same cosmic power under different names. In the ancient city of Lagash the priests honoured the god Ninurta as the father of the paradisal age. Ninurta founded temples and cities; the years of his rule, connected with the beginning of the world, were "years of plenty."

Ninurta—scaled the mountain and scattered seed far and wide,

*And the plants with one accord named him as their king.*37

The Sumerians themselves knew that Ninurta was the same as the "vegetation god" Damuzi (or Tammuz), "son of the Apsu"—the shepherd of mankind whom classical mythology knew as Adonis and whose catastrophic departure or death became the focus of ritual lamentations for many hundreds of years.

But Enki, Ninurta, and Damuzi were only aspects of the creator An, whose ideogram (as previously noted) appears as the earliest Mesopotamian sign of divinity. In all the myths and temple hymns, the Sumerians distinguish the present age from "that day," or "the days of old," when the gods "gave man abundance, the day when vegetation flourished."38 The supreme figure reigning over this remote age was AN, the central and highest light, whose foremost epithet was *lugal*, "king." The Sumerians claimed that the very institution of kingship descended from "the heaven of An." It was An who produced the beneficent age—"when the destiny was fixed for everything that was engendered (by An), when An engendered the year of abundance."39

How widespread was this memory of a Golden Age, foundered and governed by the creator himself? It appears that the tradition was either preserved in or migrated to every section of the world. In Mexico, legends recount the ancient rule of Quetzalcoatl, who appeared from the sea to become the good and wise ruler of Tollan, in the Golden Age of Anahuac. The legend describes the god as a "lawgiver, teacher of the arts, and founder of

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35 Langdon, *op. cit.*, 194.

36 *Ibid.*, 105.

37 *Ibid.*, 119.

38 Van Dijk, *op. cit.*, 16*ff.*

39 *Ibid.*, 23. Van Dijk writes (p. 32): "Cette pensée que le jour de l'origine est devenu le prototype des autres jours où, tant dans la mythologie que dans l'histoire sumérienne, de grandes catastrophes se sont produites, se trouve perpétuée dans l'expression . . . comme dans les temps lointains."

purified religion."[40] He was the "Ancestral Founding King," and all later Toltec kings considered themselves his direct descendants.[41] Of Quetzalcoatl the Toltecs sang:

All the arts of the Toltecs,

their knowledge, everything came from Quetzalcoatl.

The Toltecs were wealthy,

their foodstuffs, their sustenance, cost nothing.

They say that the squash

were big and heavy . . .

And those Toltecs were very rich,

they were very happy;

There was no poverty or sadness.

Nothing was lacking in their houses,

There was no hunger among them . . .[42]

In the story of Quetzalcoatl one finds the same confusion of man and god as in the legends of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The chronicler Sahagun writes, "Although this Quetzalcoatl had been a man they respected him as a god."[43] Indeed, he was the creator, for "He made the heavens, the sun, the earth."[44] The Toltecs claim that in the beginning their race knew only one god:

Only one god did they have,

and they held him as the

only god, they invoked him,

they supplicated him; his name

was Quetzalcoatl.[45]

Not only was Quetzalcoatl the "Giver of Life"; the legend proclaims that the first divine generation emanated directly from him. But eventually the god (like his counterparts around the world) suffered a violent fate, bringing to an end his Golden Age. To the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and American Indian accounts of the remote epoch correspond numerous legends of India, Iran, China, and northern Europe:

India

The Hindu Brahma, Yama, Vishnu, and Manu converge as representatives of a solitary supreme god and creator governing a lost paradise as the first king, setting forth the first moral codes, and imparting to mankind the fundamentals of civilization. Yama appears as the "universal lord"; Manu, as the "king of the world" or "universal legislator," to whom later monarchs traced their lineage.[46]

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40 Alexander, *Latin American Mythology*, 66.

41 Perry, *Lord of the Four Quarters*, 195. Burland, *The Gods of Mexico*, 33, 47.

42 León-Portilla, *Pre-Columbian Literatures of Mexico*, 40-41.

43 Quoted in Burland, *op. cit.*, 149.

44 Alexander, *op. cit.*, 69.

45 Perry, *op. cit.*, 196.

46 Guenon, *Le Roi du Monde*, 13*ff*. Perry, *op cit.*, 126*ff*.

"In the beginning," say the Upanishads, "there arose the Golden Child. As soon as born he alone was lord of all that is."47 This was Brahma, the "god One." His prosperous epoch, however, ended in his own death and a world-destroying conflagration.

Iran

Yima, the Iranian transcript of the Hindu Yama, is the patriarchal lord of mankind, the "brilliant Yima" who first introduced law and civilization to the world. His age knew "neither cold nor heat . . . neither age nor death." So resplendent was his rule that "the world assembled round his throne in wonder." But then (when Yima diverged from the path of justice), the Glory fled from his kingdom, and he was put to death. Thereupon, the eternal spring became a devastating winter.48

China

In the earliest age, according to ancient Chinese lore, the purest pleasure and tranquillity reigned throughout all nature. Mankind suffered neither hunger, nor pain, nor sorrow. "The whole creation enjoyed a state of happiness . . . , and things grew without labour; and a universal fertility prevailed." It was over just such a paradise that the "Yellow Emperor" Huang-ti ruled. Considered the father of the Taoist religion, Huang-ti was the creator, a universal lawmaker and founder of arts and civilization. He was also a mortal, and his fruitful era vanished upon his death.49

Northern Europe

During the "peace of Frodi," a mythical Danish king, no man injured another and a magical mill ground out peace and plenty for the entire land. Frodi is the Norse god Frey, founder of temples and religious rites, the "generous lord under whom peace and fruitfulness abounded," both the "lord of the Swedes" and "god of the world." In the footsteps of the Scandinavian Odin (the creator) well-being, peace, and good seasons followed. The legends style him the first king, the "inventor of arts," and the source of human wisdom. But the age of Frey dissolved in flames, just as Odin and his prosperous kingdom came crashing down in the fires of Ragnarok.50

Here then, is a world-wide motif, deeply ingrained in the religious and historical records of all principal races. "The idea of the Edenic happiness of the first human beings constitutes one of the universal traditions," states Lenormant.51 Ministering over this age is the Universal Monarch. While extolled as the solitary supreme god and the creator of the world, he yet appears as a ruler on earth, the ancestor of terrestrial kings. By his teaching mankind rose from barbarianism. But in the end the god met a catastrophic fate, and his death or departure brought a violent termination of the first world order.

The Rites Of Kingship

The ritual surrounding ancient kings amounts to a summary of ancient beliefs about the Universal Monarch, for every local sovereign was the successor and representative of the great god who ruled the world during the Golden Age. The rites of kingship testify to the enormous power which the collective memory of this god-king held over later generations. Chronicles of kingship from Egypt, to Mesopotamia, to Persia, to China, to Italy, to

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47 Fluegel, *Philosophy, Qabbala and Vedanta*, Vol. I, 179. Of Vishnu, the inscription on the famous Iron Pillar of Delhi declares, "The beauty of that king's countenance was as that of the full moon [candra];—by him, with his own arm, sole world-wide dominion was acquired and long held; and although, as if wearied, he has in bodily form quitted this earth, and passed to the other-world country won by his merit, yet, like the embers of a quenched fire in a great forest, the glow of his foe-destroying energy quits not the earth . . . " Vincent A. Smith, "The Iron Pillar of Delhi," 6.

48 Carnoy, *Iranian mythology*, 304-5; Darmesteter, *The Zend-Avesta*, lxv, lxxxviii, 10-11.

49 Faber, *The Origins of Pagan Idolatry*, Vol. II, 139; Ferguson, *Chinese Mythology*, 21.

50 Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, 92*ff*., 56, 202*ff*.; MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, 32, 39, 113-14, 133.

51 *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, Vol. I, 58.

northern Europe, to pre-Columbian Mexico all trace the line of kings back to the first king, a supreme cosmic deity who "founded" the kingship rites.

"When history begins there are kings, the representatives of the gods," states Hocart.[52] No greater mistake could be made by historians than to assume that the sovereignty of kings grew out of economic or material concerns. Instead, the crucial forces were religious. The king was a product of ancient ritual, and the ritual centered in cosmic beliefs which, for several millennia, could not be shaken loose. To comprehend the mighty influence of kingship in the ancient world one must penetrate the mystery of the king's prototype, the Universal Monarch.

In the first king's life and rule originated the prerogatives and obligations of all local sovereigns. It was the duty of every king to perform the rites instituted by the great god in the beginning, and to renew, if only symbolically, the primordial era of peace and plenty.

In the ritual, the king turns the wheel of law first turned by the great god, rides on the god's own cosmic ship, takes as spouse the great mother (mistress of the great father), builds temples and cities patterned after the god's celestial abode, and subdues the forces of darkness (barbarians), just as the god defeated chaos in the beginning. Whatever the marvels of the great father, it is the duty of each local king to repeat them, or at least ritually to reenact these accomplishments as if he were the great god himself.

In his study of kingship in Egypt, Henri Frankfort tells us that *the great god was the first king*: "Whether named Re, Khepri or Atum, he is the prototype of Pharaoh, and the texts abound in phrases drawing the comparison."[53] To certify his authority as a successor of the Universal Monarch, the king credits himself with having introduced an age of abundance like that of the ancestral sovereign. Thus, Thutmose III not only sits "upon the throne of Atum," but claims to have achieved "what had not been done since the time of Re" and to have restored conditions "as they were in the beginning."[54] Amenhotep III strives "to make the country flourish as in primeval times"[55]

Similarly, when the Sumerian king Dungi ascended the throne, the people supposed that a champion had arisen to restore the Paradise which existed before the Flood (but was lost through transgression).[56] Each king, states Alfred Jeremias, was expected to reproduce the wonders of the great god, the primeval king.[57] Thus does Assurbanipal proclaim that upon his ascension to the throne "Ramman has sent forth his rain—the harvest was plentiful, the corn was abundant—the cattle multiplied exceedingly."[58]

Among the Hebrews, "Every king is a Messiah, and at times the hope is expressed that the king will introduce a new Golden Age."[59] Such is the test of the *just* or *good* ruler, who brings prosperity and a fruitful earth. This

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52 *Kingship*, 7.

53 *Op. cit.*, 148.

54 *Ibid.*, 149.

55 *Ibid.*, 51.

56 Canney, "Ancient Conceptions of Kingship," 74n.

57 "Aus dem Anspruch des Gottkönigtums ergibt sich der des Weltimperiums. Der Heros Ninib wird in einem zweisprachigen Text als König eingeführt, dessen Herrschaft bis an die Grenzen Himmels und der Erde leuchten soll . . . Dasselbe gilt vom historischen König. Naramsin besteigt als Eroberer den Weltberg. Wie jeder Kult als kosmisch gilt, so wird jede Stadt, jedes Land, jedes Reich als Kosmos angesehen. Nicht die Grösse des Territoriums, sondern die Idee ist massgebend. Auch ein Stadtkonig nennt sich in diesem Sinne lugal kalama, 'Weltkönig.' Die Länderbezeichnungen und Königstitel sind in diesem Sinne kosmisch gemeint: šar kibrât irbitti 'König der vier Weltteile,' šar kissati 'König des Weltalls.'" *Handbuch*, 178.

58 Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 405.

59 Canney, *op. cit.*, 74.

belief, which seems to have held sway over the entire ancient world, receives insufficient attention from historians: it points directly to the extraordinary memory of the Universal Monarch.

Consider: Homer gives as the ideal "a blameless king whose fame goes up to the wide heaven, maintaining right, and the black earth bears wheat and barley and the trees are laden with fruit, and the sheep bring forth and fail not, and the sea hives store of fish, and all from his good guidance, and the people prosper."60

Can this be anything other than the lost age of Kronos? Why should a fertile soil confirm the *righteousness* of kings? The connection becomes clear once one takes the Universal Monarch as more than an esoteric fiction and recognizes him as the shaping force behind the ideals of kingship. Just as peace and plenty followed in the footsteps of the first (ideal, "good") king, they should follow those of his successors who share in the charisma of the great predecessor.

"The further we go back in history," observes Jung, "the more evident does the king's divinity become . . . In the Near East the whole essence of kingship was based far more on theological than on political considerations . . . it was self-evident that the king was the magical source of welfare and prosperity for the entire organic community of man, animal, and plant; from him flowed the life and prosperity of his subjects, the increase of the herds, and the fertility of the land."61 This image of the local king is drawn directly from the image of the Universal Monarch.

Thus did every ancient ruler call himself the "king of the world" and claim to radiate power and light. Thompson tells us that the Mayan ruler declared himself "as something like King of Kings, ruler of the world, regent on earth of the great Itzam Na . . . a sort of divine right of kings which would have turned James I green with envy."62 What Thompson calls an "inflated notion of grandeur" seems to characterize all ancient kings (who "shine like the sun" and direct the heavenly motions); but the reason must be appreciated: every king was, in a magical way, the Universal Monarch reborn. *The institution and ritual of kingship point to the same great god and the same Golden Age as do the myths of cosmic beginnings.*

In what historical conditions did this collective memory originate? And if the Universal Monarch governed the entire heavens as the god One, why was he called an "ancestor"?

The Heaven Man

So vivid was the great father's celestial image and so overpowering was his influence on civilization in its infancy, that the ancient chroniclers often gave him human form, recalling him as the "first man." But he was no mortal of flesh and blood. In his original character he upheld the Cosmos as the Heaven Man, a celestial giant whose body encompassed all the gods and composed the "primeval matter" of creation.

The great father reigned over the prosperous age and then departed amid great upheavals. The mythical accounts give this imposing figure such tangible and "human" traits that more than one scholar reduces him to a living man—an esteemed tribal ancestor whose heroic exploits succeeding generations progressively enlarged until the entire universe came under his authority.

This is the approach of William Ridgeway, who, in a survey of the best-known figures of the great father, argues that only an actual tribal chief could have left such a profound imprint on primitive communities. Ridgeway asks us whether the abstract "sky," or the solar orb, or a vegetation spirit—common explanations of the great father—could produce such devotion as is evident in the annual lamentations over the ruler's

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60 Ridgeway, *Dramas and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races*, 6. Compare the role of the Irish king: "Prosperity was supposed to characterize every good king's reign in Ireland, perhaps pointing to earlier belief in his divinity and the dependence of fertility on him; but the result is precisely that which everywhere marked the golden age." MacCulloch, *Celtic Mythology*, 137-38.

61 Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 258.

62 J. Eric and S. Thompson, *Maya History and Religion*, 232.

catastrophic death. Osiris, Brahma, Tammuz, Quetzalcoatl—their devotees remember each as a living ancestor, whose passing was a terrifying calamity.63

Of course Ridgeway does not assume that one man alone accounts for all the traditions of a great father. Rather he seeks to identify each in terms of a historical figure quite distinct from the venerated ancestors of other tribes. If his arguments against prevailing astronomical and vegetation theories carry great weight, they fail to explain the global parallel between the respective myths. Nor can one reconcile Ridgeway's interpretation with the incontrovertible fact that, in the earliest accounts, the great father is manifestly *cosmic*.

That many sacred histories, however, present the creator-king in human form is a paradox requiring an explanation. The solution lies in the nature of the legendary "first man."

Who Was Adam?

If one compares the traditions of Adam with the global image of the great father there can be little doubt that this primal ancestor was simply a special form of the Universal Monarch. According to Hebrew legends Adam's stature was so great that he extended from earth to the centre of heaven.64 His countenance obscured the sun.65 Like the Universal Monarch, "Adam was lord on earth, to rule and control it,"66 teaching his subjects the first arts and sciences.67 The myths say that terrestrial creatures "took him to be their creator, and they all came to offer him adoration."68 While the chroniclers call this a "mistake," substantial evidence shows that the tradition pertained more to a god than a man.

In Gnostic and other mystic systems Adam is not a mortal but a cosmic being whose body contained the seed of all later creation. As observed by G.G. Scholem, summarizing the traditions of the Hebrew Kabala, Adam—or *Adam Qadmon*—is the "primordial man," that is, "a vast representation of the power of the universe," which is concentrated in him.69 This Adam is a "man of light" occupying the centre of the Cosmos and radiating energy along the axis of the universe. He is creator and supporter of the world, whose body encloses all the elements of life.70

Islamic mystics called Adam "the universal man" or "the perfect man" upholding the cosmos.71 To the Ophites of the early Christian era, he was Adamas, "the man from on high" or, in the words of Lenormant, "the typical perfect man, that is, the heavenly prototype of 'man.'" In one of the cosmogonic fragments preserved in the extracts of Sanchuniathon (as recorded by Philo of Byblos) Adam is born at the beginning of all things and

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63 Ridgeway, *The Origin of Tragedy*; and *Dramas and Dramatic Dances*.

64 Graves and Patai, *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis*, 61; Ginzberg, *The legends of the Jews*, Vol. I, 59.

65 Ginzberg, *op. cit.*, 60.

66 *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch* 31:3, in Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the old Testament*, Vol. II, 450.

67 Jung, *op. cit.*, 398-99.

68 Ginzberg, *op. cit.*, 64; Graves and Patai, *op. cit.*, 62.

69 Quoted in Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 4.

70 "Adam-Kadmon ist nach der Kabbala der erste Mensch, der Urmensch, die erste aus dem Unendlichen, der absoluten Vollkommenheit (En Sof), unmittelbar hervorgehende Emanation, in der ältesten hebräischen Mystik Gott selber." Schwabe, *Archetyp und Tierkreis*, 9.

71 "El insânul-qadim, c'est-à-dire l'Homme primordial,' est, en arabe, une des désignations de l''Homme universel' (synonyme d'El-insânul-kamil, qui est littéralement l''Homme parfait' on total); c'est exactement l'Adam Qadmon hébraique." Guenon, *Formes Traditionelles et Cycles Cosmiques*, 64n.

is identical with the Greek *ouranos*, "heaven."[72] The modern day Mandaeans of Iraq know Adam as the "King of the Universe," a personification of all that spiritual man is intended to be and achieve.[73]

This, of course, sounds almost exactly like the primordial god One of global legend. Indeed, *in the myths of many lands the first man and creator-king are identical.* Though the Hindu Yama and his counterpart Manu appear as the creator and king of the world, they also signify the primal ancestor. Their character as first man, however, does not mean flesh and blood. They are the *celestial prototypes*, notes Lenormant, symbolic of "man" in general.[74]

The role of the Hindu Yama is filled in Persian myth not only by Yima, but also by Gaya Maretan, a legendary first king, a man of perfect purity, "produced brilliant and white, radiant and tall."[75] He, too, "appears as the prototype of mankind."[76]

Many myths make no distinction between the creator and first man. The Oceanic Tiki "is at once the first man, and the creator or progenitor of man."[77] Among the Koryak the creator of the world is also "the first man, the father and protector of the Koryak."[78] The Assiniboin, a North American Siouan tribe, say that it was the First Man who brought the World out of the primeval water. ". . . They also say of the First Man, the Creator, that no one made him, and that he is immortal."[79]

The Altaic Tatars similarly speak of a World Man or First Man. In the creation myths he doubles for god himself and raises the World from the cosmic waters.[80] Comparable is the World Man of the Laps,[81] or the Lonely Man whom the Yakuts deem the first ancestor and whose dwelling pierced the summit of heaven.[82]

If the general tradition be our guide, Adam is the solitary god of beginnings, presented in human form. This was the opinion of the controversial Gerald Massey, who, enchanted by the depth of Egyptian cosmology, proposed that the Hebrew Adam echoed the older Egyptian Atum, the god who shone forth alone in the Abyss.[83] It matters little whether the relationship of the two figures is as direct as Massey suggested. Throughout the ancient world the original god One passed into the legendary first ancestor.

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72 "Les Ophites ou Nahasséniens, dans les premiers siècles du christianisme, avaient adopté cette idée due Adam Qadmon dans leur Adamas . . . qu'ils appelaient 'l'Homme d'en haut,' traduction exacte du titre de la Kabbale, 'l'Adam supérieur.' A leur tour, les Barbélonites, qui étaient une branché dérivée des Ophites, disaient que Logos et Ennoia, par leur concours, avaient produit Autogénes (Qadmon), type de la grande lumière et entouré de quatre luminaires cosmique . . . Remarquons que dans un des morceaux cosmogoniques, cousus maladroitement les uns au bout des autres, que nous offrent les extraits du Sanchoniathon de Philon de Byblos, tels que nous les possédons, Epigeios ou Autochthon, c'est-à-dire Âdâm (avec la mème allusion a adâmâth que dans le texte de la Genèse), nait à l'orignine des choses due dieu supreme 'Elioûn, et est identique à Ouranos . . . " Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, 41n.

73 Drower, *The Coronation of the Great Šišlam*, IX.

74 Lenormant, *Les Origines De l'Histoire*, 170.

75 Carnoy, *op. cit.*, 293*ff*.

76 Dresden, "Mythology of Ancient Iran," 342.

77 Dixon, *Oceanic Mythology*, 23-27.

78 Hocart, *Kings and Councilors*, 53.

79 Alexander, *North American Mythology*, 105-6.

80 Uno Holmberg, *Siberian Mythology*, 316.

81 De Santillana and von Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill*, 130.

82 Uno Holmberg, *Der Baum des Lebens*, 59-60.

83 *Ancient Egypt*, Vol. I, 437-38.

As the creative intelligence and voice (Word) of heaven, the great father came to be viewed as the *thinking* and *speaking* "man"—a towering giant whose *body* was the original Cosmos. Both Atum and the later Adam possess this distinctive character as Heaven Man, but certain developments of the idea stand out:

1. In the Egyptian version of the myth the great god (Atum-Re), through tumultuous "speech," brings forth a circle of subordinate gods as satellites revolving in his company and forming his own limbs. The central god and his revolving members compose the primordial cosmos (Heaven, World). The crucial term is *paut*, "primeval matter," referring to the material emitted by Atum, which took form as the Cosmos. Paut is equivalent to the Khu or fiery "words of power" uttered by the great god. The term signifies at once the "circle" of the gods and the "body" of Atum-Re. Which is to say:

Cosmos=Company of Gods=Creator's Limbs, Body.

That the created Cosmos emanated from the primordial god is a theme which persisted in later traditions of Adam. From Adam Qadmon sprang successive degrees of creation. Gnostic tradition knew Adam as the *prima materia* of the Cosmos84—a remarkable parallel to the Egyptian primeval matter, the limbs of Atum-Re.

The great god's body embraces and is "heaven"—not only in Egyptian but in all principal cosmologies. Like Atum, the Sumerian An encompasses "the entire heaven"; indeed, his very name signifies "heaven," and one can trace the equation of "god" and "heaven" (or "shining heaven") through all of the ancient languages. The Chinese *tien* signifies both the high god and "heaven," as does the Altaic *tengri.* The Sanskrit dyaus (Latin deus) carries the double meaning "god" and "heaven." It is useless to look to the open sky for an explanation of this equivalence. Originally, "heaven" meant the organized Cosmos (or body) of the god One, formed by the circle of lesser gods. The myths unanimously insist that this celestial order collapsed with the death of the great god, the Heaven Man.

2. The all-embracing character of the great father facilitated an important development of the god's image at a time when cultural mixture could have destroyed the "monotheistic" theme. In ancient Egypt almost every district seems to have had its favoured representative of the god One, a fact which gives the great compendiums of Egyptian religion (*Pyramid Texts*, etc.) a misleading appearance of confusion. How can we speak of a *solitary* god when Egyptian texts refer to an endless number of primary deities?

In more than one locality the priests themselves at least partially resolved the problem by adopting alien gods as the *limbs* of the local great god—a process obviously encouraged by the preexisting image of the god as Heaven Man. This habit was widespread in Egypt and occurred as early as the *Pyramid Texts*, which assimilate a number of once-independent gods into the body of Atum:

Your head is Horus of the Netherworld, O Imperishable . . .

Your nose is the Jackal [*Ap-uat*],

Your teeth are Sopd, O Imperishable,

Your hands are Hapy and Duamutef . . .

Your feet are Imsety and Kebhsenuf . . . etc.85

A hymn from the *Papyrus of Ani* similarly honours Osiris:

The hair of Osiris Ani is the hair of Nu.

The face of Osiris Ani is the face of Re.

The eyes of Osiris Ani are the eyes of Hathor.

The ears of Osiris Ani are the ears of Ap-uat.

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84 Jung, *op. cit.*, 385, 409.

85 *Pyramid Text* 148-49. "Man kann hier wohl sogar soweit gehen dass alle anderen Götter in Atum beschlossen sind," Writes L. Grevan, *Der Ka in Theologie unb Königskult der Ägypter des Alten Reichs*, 15.

The lips of Osiris Ani are the lips of Anpu . . .[86]

In almost the same words, the *Papyrus of Nu* joins the divinities Osiris, Ptah, Anpu, Hathor, Horus, Isis, and others to the body of Re.[87] In the Memphite theology Atum, Horus, Thoth, and the company of gods became the limbs of Ptah.[88] Syncretization of this sort, though appearing absurd to us today, actually helped to preserve the original idea against the eroding forces of cultural assimilation. Faced with a growing number of competing deities, the priests proclaimed: there was only one great god in the beginning, whose body encompassed a circle of subordinate deities.

3. In a subsequent development of the myth, the Heaven Man passed into a mythical-philosophical explanation of our Earth and the material universe as a whole. Here the god appears as a primordial giant who existed before the Deluge and gave his body to creation—not the creation of the primordial Cosmos, but of *our* world with its mountains, seas, clouds, and surrounding heavenly bodies.

A noteworthy example is the Scandinavian primeval giant Ymir. In the *Prose Edda* the gods fashion "the world" from the giant's body—"from his blood the sea and lakes, from his flesh the earth, from his bones the mountains." His teeth become rocks and pebbles, his skull the sky, and his brains the clouds. The sparks and burning embers produced by his dismemberment become the stars.[89]

Compare the Hindu giant Purusha, whose body formed the world: "His mouth was the Brahman, . . . his two thighs the Vaisya; from his two feet the Sudra was born. The moon was born from his mind; from his eye the sun was born. From his navel was produced the air; from his head the sky was evolved; from his two feet the earth; from his ears the quarters."[90]

Purusha is the Primal Man. In Buddhist lore this cosmic giant is Bodhisattva Manjucri; elsewhere in China the role belongs to the demiurge Pan-Ku, whose body provides the material for creation.[91] The Zoroastrians claimed that the created world was the giant Spihr ("Cosmos"), the body of the great god Zurvan.[92] All such heaven-sustaining giants can be best understood by reference to the original Cosmos of the god One, rather than the open expanse to which the term "heaven" normally refers today.

4. If the giant myths emphasized the material form of the Heaven Man, an age of metaphysics stressed the god's character as universal intelligence, raising his image to a high degree of philosophical purity. The god One became the First Principle, First Cause, Mind, Word, or Self (*logos*, *nous*, *sophia*, *tao*, etc.). Yet in none of these cases did detached philosophy succeed in creating a pure abstraction. The Greek *nous*, the animating "Mind" or "Intelligent Spirit," was never fully divorced from the antecedent tradition of the Heaven Man. Both Eusebius and Syncellus identify the great Mind with Prometheus, the Primordial Man who lived before the Deluge.[93] In Orphic description of the universal Mind it is hardly distinguishable from the Hindu giant Purusha: ". . . All things were contained within the vast womb of the god. Heaven was his head: the bright beams of the stars were his radiant locks . . . The all-productive earth was his sacred womb: the circling ocean

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86 Budge, *Gods*, Vol.I, 111.

87 *Ibid.*

88 Clark, *Myth and Symbol*, 61-63.

89 Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*.

90 Zaehner, *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, 137.

91 Uno Holmberg, *Siberian Mythology*, 372.

92 Zaehner, *op. cit.*, 140.

93 Faber, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 172.

was his belt . . . ; his body, the universe, was radiant, immovable, eternal; and the pure ether was his intellectual soul, the mighty Nous, by which he pervades, animates, preserves, and governs, all things."[94]

Nous was the primordial One, from which all things emanated—the central light which produced and regulated the Cosmos (body). An exactly equivalent notion was the Hindu Universal Self. Here the original concept certainly did not mean "invisible soul" or anything like it. The cosmic Self was Brahma or Prajapati, the "Golden Child" who appeared alone on the first occasion. "In the beginning," say the *Upanishads*, "Prajapati stood alone."[95]

The same texts say, "In the beginning there was Self alone." From the primordial Self, enclosing all the life elements, issued the creation in successive degrees. "From the Self sprang ether; from ether, air; from air, fire; from fire, water" . . . etc.[96] (Adam Qadmon radiated the elements in similar fashion.)

Hindu thought portrays the Universal Self as the first form (and the animating soul) of the Heaven Man. "In the beginning this universe was nothing but the self in the form of a man. It looked around and saw that there was nothing but itself, whereupon its first shout was 'It is I!'; whence the concept 'I' arose." Then the Self "poured forth" the creation. The created World (Cosmos), in Hindu myth, took form as the *giant Purusha*, recognized as the body of Prajapati-Brahma (Self).

Numerous traditions view the emanation or pouring out of creation as the great god's "speech." This is the root meaning of the Greek and Hebrew "Word," which signify, really, "*visible* speech." (The Chinese *tao*, the primeval unity or First Cause, also conveys the idea "to speak.") "By the *word* of the Lord the heavens were made," states the Hebrew Psalmist (Ps. 33:6). "This idea of the creative Word of God," observes John Allegro, "came to have a profound philosophical and religious importance and was, and still is, the subject of much metaphysical debate. *But originally it was not an abstract notion; you could see the 'Word of God.'*" [Emphasis added.] In the Hebrew creation legend the "speech" of the creator is *poured out* as "spittle" or "seed." "The most forceful spurting of this 'seed' is accompanied by thunder and the shrieking wind."[97] The imagery takes us back to the thundering voice of Atum.

In most creation legends and certainly in the Egyptian and Sumerian prototypes, the great father, his life-bearing rays, his voice (word), and the company of gods (limbs)—all appear as powers *seen* and *heard*. The god is the celestial "Man" whose history became the overwhelming obsession of ancient ritual. Residing at the stationary centre—the domain which the Egyptians called *Maat* ("truth" or "wisdom") and the Mesopotamians denominated Apsu (residence of "wisdom")—the god commanded the cosmic revolutions. He was, in short, the creative "intelligence," producing a new and harmonious celestial order. Thus was the Heaven Man the *ideal* man and the *ideal* king.

The Great Father Saturn

The lost epoch of peace and plenty was the age of the planet Saturn. Ancient myths and rites present Saturn as the god One, the first king, and the all-encompassing Heaven Man.

Adam, the first ancestor, presided over a garden of abundance. Among the Hebrews such sacred occasions as the Sabbath and Jubilee commemorated this original state of man and the world, when Adam ruled Eden and the land produced freely without human effort. The Greek celebration of the *Kronia* similarly hearkened back to the lost Golden Age of Kronos. The parallel was no coincidence: Adam *was* Kronos, in human form.

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94 *Ibid.*, 42.

95 Fluegel, *op. cit.*, k203-4.

96 *Ibid.*, 202.

97 Allegro, *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*, 21.

What the Greeks called the *Kronia*, celebrating the fortunate era of Kronos, the Latins termed the *Saturnalia*, a symbolic renewal of the *Saturnia regna* or reign of the planet Saturn. In the mystic heritage Saturn is the Universal Monarch, whose prosperous age all ancient people sought to recover.

These are the words with which James G. Frazer summarizes the Latin tradition:

[Saturn] *lived on earth long ago as a righteous and beneficent king of Italy, drew the rude and scattered dwellers on the mountains together, taught them to till the ground, gave them laws, and ruled in peace. His reign was the fabled Golden Age: the earth brought forth abundantly: no sound of war or discord troubled the happy world: no baleful love of lucre worked like poison in the blood of the industrious and contented peasantry. Slavery and private property were alike unknown: all men had all things in common. At last the good king, the kindly king, vanished suddenly; but his memory was cherished to distant ages, shrines were reared in his honour, and many hills and high places in Italy bore his name.*98

The Latin poet Ovid knew the tradition well:

The first millenium was the age of gold;
Then living creatures trusted one another;
People did well without the thought of ill:
Nothing forbidden in the book of laws,
No fears, no prohibitions read in bronze,
Or in the sculpted face of judge and master . . .
No brass-lipped trumpets called, nor clanging swords
Nor helmets marched the streets, country and town
Had never heard of war: and seasons traveled
Through the years of peace. The innocent earth
Learned neither spade nor plough;
she gave her Riches as fruit hangs from the tree; grapes
Dropping from the vine, cherry, strawberry
Ripened in silver shadows of the mountain,
And in the shade of Jove's miraculous tree
The falling acorn, Springtide the single
*Season of the year.*99

But then, states Ovid, "old Saturn fell to Death's dark country." There is not a race on earth that forgot this cataclysmic event—the death of Saturn, the Universal Monarch; or the fall of Adam, the Heaven Man. And peoples the world over, for thousands of years, awaited the full turn of Time's wheel, when Saturn's kingdom would appear again to rescue the world from a decadent age of Iron (the present age, marking the lowest of the descending ages after the *Golden Age*). The powerful memory of Saturn's age gave rise to a prophesied return, as announced in the famous lines of Virgil:

Now is come the last age of the Cumean prophecy: the great cycle of periods is born anew. Now returns the Maid, returns the reign of Saturn: now from high heaven descends a new generation. And O holy goddess of

98 Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, abridged edition, 675.

99 Ovid, *The Metamophoses*, 33-34.

*childbirth Lucina, do thou be gracious at the boy's birth in whom the Iron race shall begin to cease and the Golden to arise all over the world . . .*100

That Saturn governed the Golden Age is a supreme tenet of the ancient mysteries. This is why the most sacred day of the week, commemorating the primordial era, was dedicated to Saturn. The Hebrew Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, was the day of Saturn, as was the seventh day of the Babylonian and Phoenician weeks.101 For the Romans the seventh day was *Saturni dies*, "Saturn's day." This was the Anglo-Saxon "day of Seater [Saturn]," which, of course, became our Saturday.

The archaic god One, the father of all the gods, was not the solar orb, not the "open sky," but the planet Saturn. "Saturn possessed the double property of being the forefather of all other planetary gods, and of having his seat in the highest heaven," write R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky, and R. Saxl in their study of *Saturn and Melancholy.*102 The tradition was maintained with striking consistency from its early expressions in Sumero-Babylonian religion through the age of medieval astrology.

On the subject of Mesopotamian religion and astronomy, three widely respected researchers are Peter Jensen, Alfred Jeremias, and Stephen Langdon. A survey of their works will reveal these conclusions concerning the identity of the great god in Mesopotamia: An, the oldest and highest of the Sumero-Babylonian gods, whose primordial age was "the year of abundance," signified Saturn, according to Jensen.103 The same verdict is tacitly maintained by Jeremias and Langdon, who identify the great god Ninurta as *both the planet Saturn and a form of Anu.*104 The shepherd Tammuz was likewise Saturn, according to Jeremias.105 And one can add the well-known fact that the Sumerian Enki (Babylonian Ea, the Oannes of Berossus) came to be translated Kronos (Saturn) by the Greeks.106

The identity of the creator-king as the planet Saturn seems to occur throughout the ancient world. The Canaanite (and Hebrew) El—closely corresponding to the Sumero-Babylonian An—was Saturn.107 The Hindu Manu, the king of the world, was *Satyavratta*, the planet Saturn.108 Collitz tells us that Yima, the Iranian transcript of the Hindu Yama, god of the Golden Age, likewise denoted Saturn.109 The Zoroastrians knew Saturn as the heaven-sustaining Zurvan, "the King and Lord of the Long Dominion."110 The Chinese Huang-ti, mythical founder of the Taoist religion, "is acknowledged to be Saturn."111 Even the Tahitians say of Fetu-tea, the planet Saturn, that he "was the King."112

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100 Quoted in Campbell, *Occidental Mythology*, 322-23.

101 Hildegard and Julius Lewy, "The Origin of the Week and the Oldest West Asiatic Calendar."

102 Faber *op cit.*, Vol. II, 235; Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, 152.

103 *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, 136-37.

104 Langdon, *op. cit.*, 55; Jermias, *Handbuch*, 137, 278.

105 *Handbuch*, 92, 137.

106 O'Neill, *The Night of the Gods*, 77.

107 Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 32-33; Faber, *op. cit.*, 223.

108 Faber, *op. cit.*, 491; Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, 248-49n.

109 "Konig Yima and Saturn," 95aff.

110 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 778-79.

111 De Santillana and von Dechend, *op. cit.*, 129.

112 Makemson, *The Morning Star Rises*, 47*ff.*

In classical thought Saturn is the primordial *satus*, "seed," from which the Cosmos sprang; the mind or cause which brought forth the original creation; the universal source of water, fertility, and vegetation; and father Time, the regulator of the cosmic cycle.113

It was Saturn who, before retiring to the nether realm, *dwelt on earth*, establishing his rule over the entire world. An Orphic fragment declares: "Orpheus reminds us that Saturn dwelt openly on earth and among men."114 Thus before the reign of Zeus, "Kronos [Saturn] ruled on this very earth," writes Dionysius of Halicarnassus.115

Saturn was the cosmic Adam, bringing forth a company of secondary deities as his own limbs. In the ancient Sumerian city of Lagash the priests deemed Saturn (Ningirsu or Ninurta) "the man whose stature filled the an-ki," the entire Cosmos.116

The Sumero-Babylonian worshippers of the planet Saturn, observes Hildegard Lewy, "conceived their god as the *embodiment of the whole universe*, the various deified astral as well as natural phenomena being imagined *as members of this divine body* and, therefore, as executors of a unique will." "The guiding idea . . . [was] the belief in the existence of only one great god."117

To preserve "the strictly monotheistic principle," notes Lewy, the priests composed this hymn to Saturn (Ninurta):

O Lord, Thy face is the sky . . .

Thy two eyes, oh Lord, are the gods Enlil and Ninlil.

The lids of thy two eyes are Gula (and) Belit-ili.

The white of thy two eyes Oh Lord, are the twin (god)s Sin and Nergal.

The lashes of Thy two eyes are the radiance of the Sun god . . .

Thy chin, oh Lord, is the astral Istar.

The gods Anum and Antum are thy two lips.

*Thy tongue is the god Pabilsag . . .*118

Though the language pertains to the later-evolved imagery of the Heaven Man, it leaves no doubt that the archaic doctrine conceived Saturn's body as the entire Cosmos. *The legendary cosmic giant originated in the mythical recollections of Saturn's all-encompassing form.*

In Zoroastrian myth this celestial giant is Zurvan, widely recognized as Saturn. The mystic traditions define Zurvan as the "first principle" and the "original seed." He is, writes Zaehner, "the father of the Cosmos. From his seed proceeds the entire material Cosmos . . ."119 In the creation Zurvan provided, or emitted, the "original unformed matter" from which the wheel of the Cosmos was produced. The idea is precisely that of the Egyptian "primeval matter" or the alchemist's *prima materia*, *i.e.*, Adam, the Primordial Man.

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113 Collitz, *op. cit.*, 102; Faber, *op. cit.*, 167; O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 778.

114 Quoted in de Santillana and von Dechend, *op. cit.*, 222.

115 *Ibid.*

116 Campbell, *Occidental Mythology*, 118. On the meaning of *an-ki*, usually translated "heaven and earth," see here.

117 *Origin and Significance of the Mâgen Dâwîd*," 356-57. [Emphasis added.]

118 *Ibid.*, 354-56.

119 Zaehner, *op. cit.*, 222.

The created Cosmos, say the Zoroastrian texts, took the form of an immense giant named Spihr, housing the elements of fire, wind, water, and earth. The Spihr was "the First Body," "the body of Zurvan of the Long Dominion."120 "As the god whose body is the firmament he is the macrocosm [Cosmos as a whole] corresponding to man, the microcosm [Cosmos in miniature]," observes Zaehner. Thus did Zurvan come to be viewed as "the prototype of man," eventually acquiring human form as the first ancestor—"the origin of the human race."121

Saturn's identity as the Heaven Man and first ancestor occurs again and again in Gnosticism, in alchemy, and in the traditions of the Kabala. "As the first man," observes Jung, "Adam is *Homo maximus*, the Anthropos [Man *par excellence*] from whom the macrocosm arose, or who *is* the macrocosm. He is not only the prima materia but a universal soul which is also the soul of all men."122 Saturn, Jung adds, is a *synonym* for Adam and the *prima materia*. The planet is the Philosophical Man or Original Man—"the blessed Man on high, the arch man Adamas."123

In the *Great Magical Papyrus of Paris*, Kronos/Saturn is "Lord of the World, *First Father.*"124 Orphic thought identifies the primordial man Prometheus with Saturn;125 the Lapps speak of the ancient *Waralden Olmay* or "World Man"—who "is the same as Saturnus";126 and Norse legend identifies Saturn as the Heaven Man Kroder.127

All of this means simply that the primordial Cosmos originally signified the *limbs of Saturn*, a circle of secondary lights revolving in the company of the giant planet. The terms conventionally translated as "Cosmos," "heaven," "world," "universe," or "firmament" (as in the previous paragraphs) denoted the primeval celestial order of which Saturn was king and which collapsed with Saturn's fall.

The Saturn Myth Reconstructed

From the foregoing evidence a distinctive portrait of Saturn emerges. In the earliest age recalled by the ancients the planet—or proto-planet—came forth from the cosmic sea to establish dominion over the primeval Cosmos. The planet-god ruled as the solitary, central light, worshipped as the god One—the only god in the beginning.

Saturn's epoch left a memory of such impact that later generations esteemed the god as the Universal Monarch, the first and *ideal* king, during whose rule occurred the prehistoric leap from barbarianism to civilization. Throughout Saturn's era of cosmic harmony no seasonal vicissitudes threatened men with hunger or starvation, and men suffered neither labour nor war.

In the "creation" Saturn, the primal Seed, ejected the fiery material ("primeval matter"), which congealed into a circle of lesser lights (the Cosmos). The myths describe this resounding birth of the secondary gods as Saturn's "speech": Saturn was the *Word* or *voice* of heaven.

The ancients conceived Saturn as the visible intelligence bringing forth the Cosmos as his own body and regulating its revolutions. Thus was the planet denominated the Heaven Man, a being eventually recalled as the prototype of the human race—the first ancestor.

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120 *Ibid.*, 112.

121 *Ibid.*, 112-113, 136.

122 Jung, *op. cit.*, 409.

123 *Ibid.*, 409, 493, 335; also Jung, *Aion*, 197, 208.

124 De Santillana and von Dechend, *op. cit.*, 147. [Emphasis added.]

125 *Orphic Hymns*, no. 13.

126 De Santillana and von Dechend, *op. cit.*, 130.

127 Schwabe, *op. cit.*, 8.

When Saturn departed the world, the Golden Age catastrophically ended. This is the universal tale of the dying god, the overthrown "first king" or fallen "first man." Whether betrayed by a dark force, or chastised for having committed the forbidden sin, or inflicted with old age and a weariness of mankind, the result is the same: a corruption of nature and a progressive worsening of the human condition. The story is the first—and one could almost say, *only*, theme of tragedy and drama in antiquity: Saturn's Golden Age came to a sudden and catastrophic end, either caused by or accompanied by the fall of the great god.

That the distant planet Saturn should loom at the centre of ancient rites is a fact which conventional wisdom will not easily explain. One looks in vain for any characteristic of Saturn, the present-day *planet*, which might account for Saturn, the *primeval god.* Could the present speck of light have provoked the ancient memory of a creator standing alone in the deep? Or produced the universal legend of the first king and the lost age of abundance? Or inspired the myth of the Heaven Man?

If, as is almost universally believed, the heavens have undergone no major changes in astronomically recent times, then the myth—however meticulously developed—can only be a fabrication, produced through the purest disregard for actual observation and experience. I do not ask the reader to ignore this possibility, and I am fully aware that to many mythologists myth and fancy are synonymous. Since the argument of this book rests on the coherence of the Saturn myth as a whole, and since many details remain to be covered I urge only a willingness to consider the evidence in its entirety. Whatever the true origins of the myth, it constituted for the ancients a compelling vision—a vision deserving careful study by all students of history, religion, and mythology.

III: The Polar Sun

Saturn's mythical history includes two themes which not only contradict the planet's visible appearance today, but seem to mock the canons of modern astronomy:

1. Saturn, not the solar orb, was the authentic "sun"-god of ancient ritual.

2. Throughout Saturn's reign this sun-planet remained fixed at the north celestial pole.

These two themes, affirmed by the straightforward testimony of ancient sources, compose a global memory: in the beginning Saturn did not move on its present remote orbit, but ruled as the *central sun* around which the other heavenly bodies visually revolved. Of this tradition early man has left us evidence far too numerous to cover fully in this volume. I offer below a summary of the principal sources.

Sun And Saturn

The myths and rites celebrate Saturn as the primeval sun.

Today, few mythologists looking back across several millennia to the beginnings of astral religion see anything more than worship of the rising and setting sun, the solar orb. This preoccupation with the solar orb is evident in popular surveys: "The preeminence of the Sun, as the fountainhead of life and man's well-being," writes W. C. Olcott, "must have rendered it at a date almost contemporaneous with the birth of the race, the chief object of man's worship . . . It was sunrise that inspired the first prayers uttered by man, calling him to acts of devotion, bidding him raise an altar and kindle sacrificial flames." "Before the Sun's all-glorious shrine the first men knelt and raised their voices in praise and supplication, fully confirmed in the belief that their prayers were heard and answered."[128]

Not without reason do scholars identify the Greek Helios, Assyrian Shamash, or Egyptian Re with the solar orb. Can it be doubted that Helios, radiating light from his brow and mounted on a fiery chariot, is our sun? That *helios* became the Greek word for the solar orb is beyond dispute.

In Egypt countless hymns to the god Re extol him as the divine power opening the "day."[129] "The lords of all lands . . . praise Re when he riseth at the beginning of each day." Re is the "great Light who shinest in the heavens . . . Thou art glorious by reason of thy splendours . . ."[130] Such imagery would seem to leave no question as to the god's solar character.

Yet if the preceding analysis of the great father is correct, Re (or Atum) is not the solar orb but the planet Saturn. The Golden Age of Re was the age of An, Yama, or Kronos. One thus finds of interest an Egyptian ostrakon (first century B.C.) cited by Franz Boll: the ostrakon identifies the planet Saturn as the great god Re.[131]

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128 Olcott, *Myths of the Sun*, 141-42.

129 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 627.

130 *Ibid.*, 76.

131 Boll, "Kronos-Helios," 343, R8.

Taken alone, this identification could only appear as a very late anomaly divorced from any solid tradition. But many scholars notice that among the Greeks and Latins there prevailed a mysterious confusion of the "sun" (Greek *helios*, Latin *sol*) with the outermost planet. Thus the expression "star of Helios" or "star of Sol" was applied to Saturn.132 Though the Greek *Kronos* was the Latin *Saturn*, Nonnus gives *Kronos* as the Arab name of the "sun." Hyginus, in listing the planets, names first Jupiter, then the planet "of Sol, others say of Saturn."133 Why was the planet most distant from the sun called both "sun" and "Saturn"?

Concerning the confusion of the sun and Saturn among classical writers, a simple explanation was offered: the Greek name *Helios* so closely resembles the Greek transliteration of the Phoenician El that classical authors confused the two gods; since El is the Greek Kronos—and is so translated by Philo—Kronos/Saturn came to be confused with Helios, the sun.134 Yet, as noted by Boll, the identification is more widespread than generally acknowledged and is much more than a misunderstanding of names.135 The "confusion" is also far older than Philo, who lived in the first century of the Christian era. In the *Epinomis* of Plato (who lived in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.), there is an enumeration of the planets, which, as customarily translated, entails this unstartling statement: "There remain, then, three stars (planets), one of which is preeminent among them for slowness, and some call him after Kronos."136 Yet the original reading is not *Kronos* but *Helios*137—which is to say that Plato (or his pupil Phillip of Opus, to whom some ascribe authorship of the *Epinomis*) gave the name Helios to Saturn. But copyists, who could not believe that Helios was anything other than the sun, "corrected" the reading to "Kronos." Moreover, writes Boll, this practice of "correcting" the name Helios to Kronos was not uncommon among later copyists.138 Originally, Boll concludes, Helios and Saturn were "one and the same god."139

The equation of sun and Saturn is very old, with roots in Sumero-Babylonian astronomy. Of the Babylonian star-worshippers the chronicler Diodorus writes: "To the one we call Saturn they give a special name, 'Sun-Star.'"140 Among the Babylonians the "sun"-god *par excellence* was Shamash, the "light of the gods," whom scholars uniformly identify with the solar orb. But M. Jastrow, in an article entitled "Sun and Saturn," reports that in the Babylonian astronomical texts the identification of Shamash with Saturn is unequivocal: "*the planet Saturn is Shamash*," they boldly declare.141

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132 Bouché-Leclerq, *L'Astrologie Grecque*, 93, note 2.

133 Hyginus, *Poetica astronomica* II, 42.

134 This explanation is tentatively accepted by Bouché-Leclerq, *op. cit.*, 93, note 2.

135 "Allein seither ist völlig klar geworden und wohl auch allgemein zugestanden, dass die Gleichsetzung von Kronos, dem Gotte des Planeten Saturn, mit dem Sonnengotte weit vor jedem möglichen griechischen Missverständnis liegt: es handelt sich um ein altes und durch Keilinschriften vollkommen sicher bezeugtes Stuck des babylonischen Sternglaubens . . . " Boll, *op. cit.*, 343.

136 Plato, *Epinomis*, 987c.

137 *Ibid.*

138 "Ich habe seitdem die gleiche Variante noch an verschiedenen Stellen beobachtet: in Ptolem. Tetrab, p. 67, 8 schreiben die zwei alten Ausgaben Kronon während die beste Hs. V (Vatic. 1038) hlion hat; bei Rhetorios in Catal, codd. astrol. VII 203, 9 steht in dem Hss. R V Kronon, in T hlion: gemeint ist hier wie bei Ptolemaios der Planet Saturn. auffallender und wohl kaum ursprünglich ist die gleiche Variante in dem Pinax des Kebes, wo die 3. Hand des sehr späten Cod. C (XV. Jahr.) und dije Hs. Meibojms am Rande zweimal (p. 1, 1.2, 7 Pr.) den Namen (Kronon) des Gottes, dem der Tempel mit jenem Pinaz geweiht ist, durch 'Hlion ersetzen." *Op. cit.*, 344.

139 "So viel ist aber sicher, dass nach einer oft bezeugten Vorstellung der Babylonier und Syrer Kronos und Helios eine und dieselbe Gottheit sind, die sich in den zwei mächtigsten Gestirnen des Tages und der Nacht offenbarte," *Ibid.*, 345-46. It must be emphasized, however, that the proposed distinction between day and night sun is unnecessary. There is only one primitive sun: Kronos-Helios.

140 Diodorus II. 30-33.

141 Jastrow, "Sun and Saturn ", 163-78.

In support of this identity Jastrow notes numerous examples involving "the interchangeable application of the term 'Samas' to either the great orb of the day or the planet Saturn."142

The apparent equivalence of Saturn and the "sun" goes back to Sumerian times, as is evident in the dual aspect of the creator god Ninurta. Langdon deems Ninurta both the sun and Saturn: ". . . the *sun-god* Ninurta . . . in the original Sumerian Epic of Creation, defeated the dragon of chaos and founded cities . . . In Sumero-Babylonian religion he is the War-god and planet Saturn."143

It is not difficult to see why Ninurta, or Ningirsu, though identified with the planet Saturn in the astronomical texts, came to be confused with the solar orb. "Ningirsu, coming from Eridu, rose in overwhelming splendour. In the land it became day."144 Saturn, as Ningirsu, is "the god who changes darkness into light."145 The priests of Lagash invoke him as "King, Storm, whose splendour is heroic."146 This unexpected quality of the planet led Jensen to designate Saturn as a symbol of the "eastern sun" or "the sun on the horizon," though he offered no explanation for the proposed connection.147

The sunlike aspect of Saturn prevails from the earliest astronomy through medieval mysticism and astrology. "Saturn with its rays sends forth transcendent powers which penetrate into every part of the world," wrote an Arabic astrologer of the tenth century.148 When the alchemists, inheritors of ancient teachings, spoke of Saturn as "the best sun,"149 it is unlikely that they themselves knew what to do with the idea. But that the tradition was passed down from remote antiquity is both indisputable and crucial.

In claiming that the great father Saturn, presiding over the lost epoch, was the primeval "sun," I do not propose that our sun was absent—rather, that it simply did not preoccupy the ancients. To avoid confusion on this point I must indicate here a conclusion for which I intend to cite additional evidence in a later section.

Day And Night

Those scholars who notice the identification of the ancient sun and the planet Saturn usually speak of Saturn as a mythical "night sun" or "second sun."150 But in truth, Saturn was the sun-god pure and simple, for the body we call "sun" today was not a subject of the early rites.

The problem is to discern the original meaning of "day" and "night." Many hymns to Shamash and Re—the celebrated suns of Mesopotamia and Egypt—describe these gods coming forth at the beginning of the ritual day, and the terminology often *appears* to signify the rising solar orb. One of the chapters of *Book of the Dead*, for example, is "The Chapter of Coming Forth by Day."151 Does this not refer to the solar orb rising in the east?

A quite different interpretation is possible. Considerable evidence suggests that, to the ancients, the day began with what modern man calls "night"—that is, with the *setting* of the solar orb. It is widely acknowledged that

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142 *Ibid.*, 171.

143 *Semitic Mythology*, 55. [Emphasis added.]

144 Albright, "*The Mouth of the Rivers*," 165.

145 Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 57.

146 Hildegard Lewy, "Origin and Significance of the Mâgen Dâwîd," 335.

147 *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, 115-116, 136*ff.*

148 Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, 129.

149 Schwabe, *Archetyp und Tierkreis*, 492.

150 This is, for example, the opinion of both Boll and Jastrow, in the articles cited above in notes 131 and 141.

151 Chapter II.

the Egyptian day once began at sunset.152 The same is true of the Babylonian and Western Semitic days.153 The Athenians computed the space of a day from sunset to sunset, and the habit appears to have prevailed among northern European peoples.154

This widespread custom poses a special problem for solar mythology. If, originally, the day began with the *disappearance* of the solar orb and the coming out of other heavenly bodies, who is the great god who shines at the beginning of this day? The explicit answer comes from the Sumerian texts identifying *Saturn* as god of the "dawn." Saturn "came forth in overwhelming splendour. In the land it became day."155 This does not (as Jensen proposed) equate Saturn with the "sun [solar orb] on the horizon." It means that the coming forth of Saturn inaugurated the *archaic* day, which began at sunset. So long as the solar orb was visible, the fiery globe of Saturn remained subdued, unable to compete with the sheer light of the former body. But once the solar orb sank beneath the horizon, Saturn and its circle of secondary lights acquired a terrifying radiance.

Therefore, in archaic terms, Saturn was the great god of the "day," not the "night sun" as scholars usually propose. But obviously, the eventual shifting of the "dawn of day" from the solar sunset to the solar sunrise could only create a widespread confusion of day and night and morning and evening. On this distinction among the Egyptians, Budge writes, "At a very early period, however, the difference between the Day-sky and the Night-sky was forgotten."156 Under normal circumstances would one likely forget this distinction?

If there is confusion, it is because radically different celestial orders separate the present age from the former. The *primeval* sun was the solitary god of the deep, the one god of archaic monotheism, the planet Saturn. Only in a later age did Saturn come to be confused with the solar orb.

There is, in fact, a decisive difference between the primeval god and the body we call the sun today: unlike the rising and setting solar orb, *the original sun-god never moved.*

Saturn And The Pole

In ancient ritual Saturn appears as the stationary sun or central fire at the north celestial pole.

When Saturn ruled the world, his home was the summit of the world axis: with this point all major traditions of the great father agree. Even today, in our celebration of Christmas, we live under the influence of the polar Saturn. For as Manly P. Hall observes, "Saturn, *the old man who lives at the north pole*, and brings with him to

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152 E. Neumann, for example, speaks of a presolar ritual in which "the reckoning of time begins and ends with nightfall. Even in Egypt the evening is the time of 'birth,' and the morning, when the luminous world of the stars vanishes, is a time of death, in which the day-time sky devours the children of night. This conception, which was universal among early mankind, becomes understandable if we free ourselves from the correlation day=sun." *The Great Mother*, 26.

One of the many peculiarities of the Egyptian sun-god is that he not only brings the day, but shines at "night." *The Book of the Dead* reads, "I am that god Re who shineth in the night." To the "father of the gods" the Egyptians sang, " . . . thou lightest up the habitation of the night . . . " Re Harmachis, in the Dendera temple inscriptions appears as "the shining Horus, the ray of light in the night." Budge, *op. cit.*, Chapter CXXXI; Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 269; Brugsch, *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Ägyptiacarum*, 16.

In this connection one cannot fail to notice the number of ancient gods whom scholars customarily deem "night suns." Egypt is a good example. The popular god Osiris is almost always termed a sun of night, as is Ptah Seker. Budge, *op. cit.*, 7n, follows a well-established practice when he designates Atum "a form of Re and the type of the night sun." The same appellation is given to the Sumero-Babylonian Tammuz, the Hindu Varuna and Yama, the Iranian Yima, and the Greek Dionysus to name a few of many examples. In the conventional view Saturn, for reasons which remain unspecified, is the planetary representative of the night sun.

153 On the original priority of the night among the Hebrews and Arabs see Ignaz Goldziher, *Mythology Among the Hebrews*, 62-74. In Babylonia it was in "later times" that "the reckoning of time was altered to the extent of making the day begin with sunrise, instead of with the approach of night." Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 78.

154 Faber, *The Origins of Pagan Idolatry*, Vol. I, 236-37.

155 Albright, *op. cit.*, 165-66.

156 Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol.II, 102.

the children often a sprig of evergreen (the Christmas tree), is familiar to the little folks under the name Santa Claus."157

Santa Claus, descending yearly from his polar home to distribute gifts around the world, is a muffled echo of the Universal Monarch, the primordial Osiris, Yama, or Kronos spreading miraculous good fortune. His polar abode, which might appear as an esoteric aspect of the story, is in fact an ancient and central ingredient. Saturn, the "best sun" and king of the world, ruled from the polar zenith. But while popular tradition located Santa Claus at the *geographical* pole, the earlier traditions place his prototype, the Universal Monarch, at the *celestial* pole, the pivot of the revolving heavens.

The home of the great father is the cosmic centre—the "heart," "midst," or "navel" of heaven. As the earth rotates on its axis the northern stars wheel around a fixed point. While most stars rise and set like the sun and moon, the circumpolar stars—those which describe uninterrupted circles about a common centre—never fall below the horizon. The invisible axis of the earth's rotation leads directly to that central point—the celestial pole—around which the heavens visually turn. All of the ancient world looked upon the polar centre as the "middle place," "resting place," or "steadfast region" occupied by the Universal Monarch.

One of the first writers to recognize the pole as the special domain of the great god was W. F. Warren, who wrote in *Paradise Found* (published in 1885): "The religions of all ancient nations . . . associate the abode of the supreme God with the North Pole, the centre of heaven; or with the celestial space immediately surrounding it. [Yet] no writer on comparative theology has ever brought out the facts which establish this assertion."

In the following years a number of scholars, each focusing on different bodies of evidence, reached the same conclusion. The controversial and erratic Gerald Massey, in two large works (*The Natural Genesis* and *Ancient Egypt*), claimed that the religion and mythology of a polar god was first formulated by the priest-astronomers of ancient Egypt and spread from Egypt to the rest of the world. In a general survey of ancient language, symbolism, and mythology, John O'Neill (*The Night of the Gods*) insisted that mankind's oldest religion centered on a god of the celestial pole.

Zelia Nuttall, in *Fundamental Principles of Old and New World Civilizations*, undertook an extensive review of ancient Mexican astronomy, concluding that the highest god was polar. From Mexico she shifted to other civilizations, finding the same unexpected role of a polar god.

Reinforcing the surprising conclusions of the above researchers was the subsequent work of others, among them Uno Holmberg (*Der Baum des Lebens*), who documented the preeminence of the polar god in the ritual of Altaic and neighbouring peoples, suggesting ancient origins in Hindu and Mesopotamian cosmologies;158 Leopold de Saussure (*Les Origines de l'Astronomie Chinoise*), who showed that primitive Chinese religion and astronomy honour the celestial pole as the home of the supreme god; Rene Guenon (*Le Roi du Monde and Le Symbolisme de la Croix*), who sought to outline a universal doctrine centering on the polar gods and principles of ancient man.

That these and other researchers, each starting down a different path, arrived at much the same conclusion concerning a supreme polar god of antiquity should have been sufficient to provoke a reappraisal of long-standing assumptions. Is it possible that, as these writers claimed, the ancient star-worshippers paid greater heed to a god of the pole than to the solar orb? Rather than respond to the question, solar mythologists diplomatically ignored it, thereby assigning the above investigators to an undeserved obscurity.

I want to reopen the question, but to approach it from a different perspective. Most of the aforementioned writers possessed a common—if unspoken—faith in the ceaseless regularity of the solar system, seeking to explain the polar god in strictly familiar terms: the centre of our revolving heavens is the celestial pole; the great god of the centre and summit must have been the star closest to this cosmic pivot.

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157 *An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolic Philosophy*, LXXIX. [Emphasis added.]

158 See Uno Holmberg, *Die Religiösen Vorstellungen der Altaischen Völker*, 37.

But as observed in the previous pages, the great father was not a mere "star"; he was the planet Saturn, recalled as the preeminent light of the heavens. Moreover, the Saturn myth states that the planet-god *resided at the celestial pole!*159

In the myth and astronomy of many lands Saturn's connection with the pole is direct and unequivocal. Chinese astronomers designated the celestial pole as "the Pivot," identifying the "Genie of the Pivot" as the planet Saturn.160 Saturn was believed to have his seat at the pole, reports G. Schlegel.161 This strange and unexplained image of Saturn caught the attention of de Saussure (one of the foremost experts on Chinese astronomy), who added an additional startling fact: the Iranian *Kevan*, the planet Saturn, also occupies the polar centre.162

But the theme is older than Chinese or Iranian tradition, for it finds its first expression in the Sumero-Babylonian An (Anu), the highest god, acknowledged as the planet Saturn. Each evening, at Erech, the priests looked to the celestial pole, beginning their prayer with the words, "O star of Anu, prince of the heavens."163

Saturn ruled from the summit of the world axis.164 I must note, however, that I am not the first to observe this general principle. A recent volume by Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend, entitled *Hamlet's Mill*, offers the revolutionary conclusion that according to an ancient doctrine Saturn occupied the celestial pole.

But the authors, maintaining an unqualified attachment to the uniformitarian premise, exclude in advance any extraordinary changes in the solar system. Instead they speak of Saturn's polar station as a "figure of speech" or astral allegory whose meaning remains to be penetrated.

"What," they ask, "has Saturn, the far-out planet, to do with the Pole? . . . It is not in the line of modern astronomy to establish any link connecting the planets with Polaris, or with any star, indeed, out of reach of the members of the zodiacal system. Yet such figures of speech were an essential part of the technical idiom of archaic astrology, and those experts in ancient cultures who could not understand such idioms have remained helpless in the face of the theory."165

If one could find, in the present order of the heavens, a possible inspiration for the widespread tradition of Saturn's polar station, then the historians and mythologists, operating on uniformitarian principles, would have something concrete to work with. But the primordial age, as defined by universal accounts, stands in radical contrast to our own era. One can no more explain Saturn's ancient connection with the pole by reference to the present arrangements of the planets than one can explain, within the uniformitarian framework, Saturn's image as the Universal Monarch, the Heaven Man, or the primeval sun. Yet the fact remains that throughout the ancient world these images of Saturn constituted a pervasive memory which many centuries of cultural evolution could not obliterate.

The Unmoved Mover

In the sixth century B.C. Xenophanes of Colophon offered this definition of the true god:

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159 Quoted in Faber, *A Dissertation on the Cabiri*, Vol. I, 134.

160 Schlegel, *L'Uranographie Chinoise*, 630-31.

161 *Ibid.*, 631.

162 De Saussure, "*Le Système Cosmologique Sino-Iranienne*," 235-97; "*La Série Septénaire, Cosmologique et Planétaire*," 333-70; see discussion of de Saussure's findings.

163 Langdon, *op. cit.*, 94.

164 On Anu as the ruler of the celestial pole, see also Jensen, *op. cit.*, 17-19.

165 *Ibid.*, 136.

"There is one God, greatest among gods and men, neither in shape nor in thought like unto mortals . . . *He abides ever in the same place motionless, and it befits him not to wander hither and thither.*"166

A remarkable parallel occurs in the Hindu Upanishads:

There is only one Being who exists,

Unmoved yet moving swifter than the mind;

Who far outstrips the senses, though as gods

They strive to reach him, who, himself at rest,

Transcends the fleetest flight of other beings.

Who, like the air, supports all vital action.

He moves, yet moves not.167

To the supreme power in heaven Aristotle gave the name "Unmoved Mover," a term which expressed succinctly the paradoxical character of the god One: though turning the heavens, he himself remained motionless. According to the general tradition, the god stood at the stationary cosmic centre, imparting movement to the celestial bodies which revolved about him.

A fact which conventional interpretation cannot explain is that the very terms which ancient astronomers apply to the celestial pole are applied also to Saturn. Consider the image of the pole:

I am constant as the northern star,

Of whose true-fix'd *and* resting *quality.*

There is no fellow in the firmament.

So declared Shakespeare's Caesar. [Emphasis added.] Many centuries before Shakespeare, Hipparchus spoke of "a certain star remaining ever at the same place. And this star is the pivot of the Cosmos." Among the Chinese, the pole star is the "star of the Pivot,"168 to the Polynesians it is the "Immovable One."169 The Pawnee call it "the star that stands still"; this star, they say, "is different from other stars, because it never moves."170 To the Hindus, the star is *Dhruva*, "firm."171

Consider now the image of the planet Saturn. In China, as noted above, Saturn rules "the Pivot." The Sumero-Babylonian Ninurta—Saturn—is the god of the "steady star" and of "repose."172 Enki, also the planet Saturn, is "the motionless lord."173 Mithraic teaching portrays the planet as the cosmic man Aion, the "resting" god.174 In Sanchuniathon's description of the Phoenician El (Saturn) the god "flew while at rest and rested in

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166 Quoted in Campbell, *Occidental Mythology*, 243. [Emphasis added.]

167 Quoted in O'Neill, *The Night of the Gods*, 737. [Emphasis added.]

168 Schlegel, *op. cit.*, 631.

169 Makemson, *The Morning Star Rises*, 5.

170 Alexander, *North American Mythology*, 95.

171 Coomaraswamy and Nivedita, *Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists*, 378.

172 Langdon, *Sumerian Liturgical Texts*, 137.

173 Lenormant, *Origines de l'Histoire*, Vol. I, 393.

174 Schwabe, *op. cit.*, 8, 388.

flight." To this description, O'Neill responds: "Just the symbolism of the Polar Power whirling the heavens round, but ever reposing himself at the motionless centre."[175]

Saturn's stationary character is the trait most overlooked by conventional mythologists. The reason is that the mythologists expect the image of the primeval light god to fit the rising and setting solar orb, while in fact ancient ritual and myth portray the god as a central sun at the polar zenith.

To the modern mind nothing could be less "scientific" than a polar sun. Yet the unmoving sun *is* the ancient tradition, as noted by E. A. S. Butterworth: "[The primeval sun] is not the natural sun of heaven, for it neither rises nor sets, but is, as it seems, ever at the zenith above the navel of the world. *There are signs of an ambiguity between the pole star and the sun.*"[176]

If Butterworth is correct we have a convergence of three vital truths: Saturn was the primeval sun; Saturn occupied the celestial pole; the primeval sun occupied the pole. Each of these points contradicts modern understanding, yet each finds verification in the independent research of specialists, none of whom seem to have been aware of the work of the others. (That is, de Santillana and von Dechend, while documenting Saturn's connection with the pole, seem unaware of the planet's identity as sun; Jastrow and Boll, though perceiving the equation of Saturn and sun, ignore Saturn's polar station; Butterworth, though recognizing the polar sun, fails to notice that he is dealing with the planet Saturn.)

On the tradition of the polar god or polar sun numerous traditions concur.

Egypt

If there is an orthodoxy among Egyptologists, it is the belief that the Egyptian great god has his inspiration in the *rising and setting* sun. Atum, Re, Osiris, Horus, Khepera, and virtually all the great gods of the Egyptians are explained as symbols of the solar orb—either the sun of day, or the sun "during its night journey."

Because the Egyptian concept of the "sun" involves many complexities which might distract from the present general inquiry, I shall reserve many details for treatment in later sections. I cite below, however, a few of the evidences indicating the polar station of the Egyptian supreme god.

1. Of the Egyptian great father there is no better representative than the mighty Atum, whom Egyptologists usually regard as a sun-god shining at night. He is the acknowledged alter ego of the primeval sun Re, founder of the lost Golden Age.

The *Coffin Texts* say:

The Great God lives,

fixed in the middle of the sky

upon his support.[177]

The reference is to Atum, whom the eminent Egyptologist R. T. Rundle Clark calls "the arbiter of destiny perched on the top of the world pole."[178]

The creation legend states that when Atum came forth alone in the beginning, he stood *motionless* in the cosmic sea.[179] His epithet was "the Firm Heart of the Sky."[180] To the Egyptians, states Enel, "Atum was the

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175 *Op. cit.*, 748.

176 *The Tree at the Navel of the Earth*, 124. [Emphasis added.]

177 Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, 59.

178 *Ibid.*, 41.

179 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 309.

180 Piankoff, *The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 36.

chief or centre of the movement of the universe" at the celestial pole, for the Egyptians knew the pole as the "midst" or "heart" of heaven—"the single, immovable point around which the movement of the stars occurred."[181]

Clark tells us that "the celestial pole is 'that place' or 'the great city.' The various designations show how deeply it impressed the Egyptian imagination. If god is the governor of the universe and it revolves around an axis, then god must preside over the axis."[182]

Clark is so certain of the great god's polar station that he writes, "No other people was so deeply affected by the eternal circuit of the stars around a point in the northern sky. Here must be the node of the universe, the centre of regulation."[183] (As we will see, Clark underestimates the influence of the polar centre in other lands.)

Atum was the "Unmoved Mover" described in Egyptian texts many centuries before Aristotle offered the phrase as a definition of the supreme power. The Egyptian hieroglyph for Atum is a primitive sledge , signifying "to move." To the god of the cosmic revolutions, the *Book of the Dead* proclaims "Hail to thee, Tmu [Atum] Lord of Heaven, who givest motion to all things."[184] But while moving the heavens Atum remained *em hetep*, "at rest" or "in one spot."

2. Moreover, and contrary to nearly universal opinion, the great god Re has little in common with the solar orb. Unlike our ever-moving sun, Re stands at the stationary "midst" or "heart" of heaven.[185] He is the motionless sun "who resteth on his high place."[186]

His home is the polar zenith:

. . . May your face be in the north of the sky, may Re summon you from the zenith of the sky.[187]

My father ascends to the sky among the gods who are in the sky; he stands in the Great Polar Region and learns the speech of the sun folk. Re . . . sets his hand on you at the zenith of the sky.[188]

Concerning the enigmatic symbolism of the Egyptian sun-god, Kristensen tells us that "the place where the light sets is also called the place where it rises."[189] In reference to the solar orb the statement appears meaningless. But the notion that Re rises and sets in one spot is inseparable from the vision of Re as the lord of *hetep*, "rest." In fact the god does not literally "rise" or "set" at all. With the phases of day and night his light "comes forth" and "recedes"; the god "comes out" and "goes in." When we say today that the moon "comes out" at night we do not mean that it rises in the east; we mean simply that the moon *grows bright.* Precisely the same meaning attaches to the Egyptian words which so often receive the translation "rise" (*uben*, *pert*, *un*).[190]

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181 *Les Origines de la Genèse et l'Enseignement des Temples de l'Ancienne Egypte*, 20-21, n.2.

182 Clark, *op. cit.*, 58.

183 *Ibid.*, 58.

184 Renouf, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 147.

185 Faulkner, *The Coffin Texts*, Spell 257.

186 Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, 394.

187 *Pyramid Texts* 1016.

188 *Pyramid Texts* 1168-70.

189 Quoted in Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri*, 29.

190 Hence Re not only "comes out" in the Tuat, but "rests" there also. Piankoff, *The Litany of Re*, 25.

Thus, rather than a moving sun, Re is the central pivot round which the lesser gods revolve. "They [the companions of Re] go round about behind him,"191 states one text. The deceased king aspires to attain the great god's position so that "these gods shall revolve round about him."192

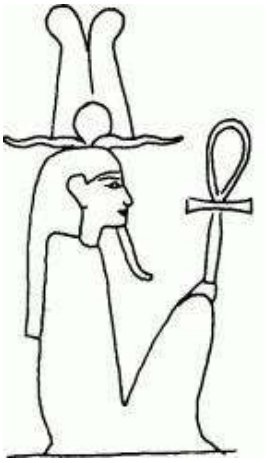

Figure 2. The resting Osiris.

3. The god-king Osiris, an obvious counterpart of the primeval sun Re, is the god of the *tet*, "firmness" or "stability." "He is always a passive figure," notes Budge. "As a cosmic god he appears as a *motionless* director or observer of the actions of his servants who fulfil his will."193 In this he is the prototype of the terrestrial king, who takes up symbolic residence at the cosmic centre.

Thus is Osiris the stationary *heart* of heaven: "Beautiful is the god of the motionless heart," proclaims the *Book of the Dead.*194 The hymns extol Osiris as the lord of *hetep*, "rest," or as "the resting heart." One Egyptologist after another seeks to understand the imagery in terms of a night sun "resting" in an imagined underworld. But numerous Egyptian sources show that the place of rest is the motionless centre and summit. Osiris is "exalted upon his resting place,"195 or "in the heights."196

The hieroglyphs portray a column of steps leading to the polar zenith; it is here that the hymns locate Osiris: "Hail, O Osiris, thou hast received thy sceptre and the place whereon thou art to rest, and the steps are under thee."197 The deceased beseeches the great god: ". . . May I be established upon my resting place like the Lord of Life."198

It is also futile to interpret Osiris' "rest" or "motionless heart" as mere symbols of death. The state of rest, one must remember, belongs to the living or resurrected Osiris, for the texts apply the term *hetep*, "rest," to Osiris *em ankh*, "as a living being."199 It should be clear to all who consider the language of the hymns that the unmoving *heart* means the unmoving *god*, for the heart *is* the god (as when the texts describe the heart "upon

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191 Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 398.

192 *Ibid.*, 644.

193 *From Fetish to God*, 190. [Emphasis added.]

194 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 120.

195 Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 260.

196 Renouf, *op cit.*, 7.

197 Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 388-89.

198 *Ibid.*, 251.

199 Budge, *The Papyrus of Ani*, 123, 134.

its seat").[200] Osiris, the motionless heart, is the central, stationary sun: "O still heart, Thou shinest for Thyself, O still heart."[201]

4. The stationary sun, the sun at the polar zenith, also occurs under many other names in Egyptian religion, including:

—Horus, the "firm and stable" god who "takes his place at the zenith of the sky."[202]

—Ptah, "in the great resting place."

—Iemhetep, whose name means "the one who comes forth while standing in one place."[203]

—Sepa, whose name means "stable."[204]

—Men, whose name means "fixed," "abiding," "stable," "firm."[205]

—Tenen, connected with the root *enen*, meaning "motionless," "rest," "inactivity."[206]

—Kheprer, the Turning One, who spins around while occupying the same stationary position.[207]

Thus, in the hieroglyphs, all of the Egyptian great gods appear as *firmly seated* figures. This immovable posture— —which corresponds to divine imagery in many other lands is no accident. The seated or resting god is the Unmoved Mover.

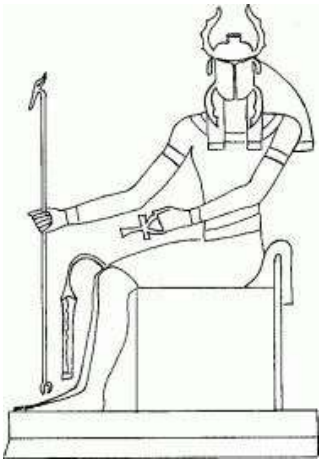

Figure 3. Kheprer, the Turning One.

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200 *Ibid.*, 105.

201 Budge, *Gods*, Vol, I, 332.

202 *Pyramid Text*, 854.

203 Massey, *Ancient Egypt*, 426.

204 Énel, *op. cit.*, 117.

205 Budge, *A Hieroglyphic Vocabulary to the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead*, 174.

206 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 508-9.

207 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 151.

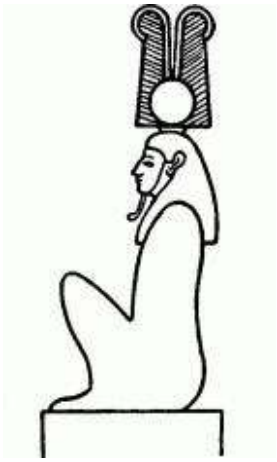
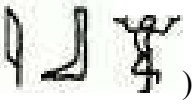


Figure 4. The firmly seated (resting) god.

5. That the Egyptians conceived the cosmic centre as the source of celestial motions is clear from the terminology of the centre. The "heart" of heaven is *ab* ( ), a word which has the concrete meaning of "centre" or "midst." But as noted by Renouf, *ab* () also conveys "the sense of lively motion."208 In the latter usage, the determinative appears to depict a human figure turning around while standing on one foot, *i.e.*, in one place, at rest. Denoted by the word *ab* is the resting but ever-turning heart of heaven. Similarly, while the term *men* means "fixed" or "abiding," in reference to the god of the stable centre and summit, *mennen* means "to go round."209

To the great god, as the steadfast centre or foundation stone of the Cosmos, the Egyptians gave the name *Benben* (see discussion of The Foundation Stone). But *ben* alone "is a verb of motion, and particularly of 'going around'" This dual, seemingly paradoxical relationship of motion and rest occurs throughout the Egyptian texts and becomes intelligible only when one recognizes the central sun, the Unmoved Mover, as the source of the imagery.

"I am the Heir, the primary power of motion and of rest," reads the *Book of the Dead.* Though the words have a modern sound, Renouf assures us that they express the literal sense of the hieroglyph text. It is in the root character of every polar god to "move" while at "rest."210

6. Inseparable from the Egyptian motion of "rest" is the concept of "silence." The motionless centre of the heavens is the Still Place or Region of Silence. (Our English word *still* accurately conveys the close relationship between the concepts *unmoving* and *silent.*)

> [The great god is] *King of the Tuat . . . Noble Body whose* rest is complete *in the Region of Silence.*211
>
> *King is he who* rests *in the Silent Region.*212

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208 *Ibid.*, 67.

209 *Ibid.*, 45.

210 *Ibid.*, 113.

211 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 106. [Emphasis added.]

212 Piankoff, *The Litany of Re*, 40-41. [Emphasis added.]

But those experts who connect the solar orb with the great god have nothing to say concerning such language. The god who stands at rest in the Silent Region is Re, the sun-god *par excellence;* yet the entire concept contradicts the image of our wandering sun.

7. What often prevents generalists from perceiving the stationary character of the primeval sun is the translator's unfortunate habit of substituting vague and intangible terms for literal meanings. Budge follows a common practice when he renders a hymn to Re in these words: "Homage to thee, O thou who art in peace."213 From such terminology one could hardly be expected to formulate a clear concept of the god. But the phrase "in peace" actually conceals a vital meaning, for the Egyptian original is *em hetep.* Literally, the hymn celebrates the god who shines "at rest" or "while standing in one place." (In seeking to interpret Egyptian sources I have found that specific, literal, and concrete meanings of the original texts are uniformly preferable to the more general and abstract language so often chosen by translators. Of this truth, the reader will find many examples in the following sections.)

Mesopotamia

Like the central sun of Egypt, the primeval light god of Sumero-Babylonian religion "comes forth" (shines) and "goes in" (declines, diminishes) at the "centre" or "midst" of heaven (*Kirib sami; Kabal sami*), which is also the zenith (*ilatu*). "In the centre he made the zenith," states one text.214 Residing at the centre and summit, the great god is the "firm" or "steadfast" light.215

The oldest representative of this stationary sun is the polar god An (Anu).216 An fills the sky with his radiant—even terrifying—light: "the terror of the splendour of Anu in the midst of heaven."217 Thus does Robert Brown, Jr., term the polar god a *nocturnal sun*, the "Lord of the Night."218

All principal forms of An appear as *stationary* gods. Enki is "the motionless lord" and the god of "stability."219 A broken Sumerian hymn, in reference to Ninurash (a form of Ninurta) reads:

Whom the "god of the steady star*" upon a foundation.*

*To . . . cause to repose in years of plenty.*220

Failing to perceive the concrete meaning of such terms, solar mythologists like to think of a place of "repose" as a hidden "underworld" beneath the earth, a dark region visited by the sun after it has set. But the place of repose is no underworld. It is:

The lofty residence . . .

The lofty place . . .

*The place of lofty repose . . .*221

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213 Budge, *From Fetish to God*, 401.

214 Jensen, *op. cit.*, 11.

215 *Ibid.*, 16-19; Brown, *Researches into the Origins of the Primitive Constellations*, Vol. I, 269; Vol. II, 191.

216 Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 94; Jensen, *op. cit.*, 17*ff.* I certainly cannot accept, however, Jensen's identification of Anu with the pole of the ecliptic.

217 Sayce, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, 482.

218 *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, 184, 190.

219 Lenormant, *op. cit.*, 393. Ea (Eriki) was the "king of destinies, stability and justice." O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 490.

220 Langdon, *Sumerian Liturgical Texts*, 137. [Emphasis added.]

221 Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, 172.

Ninurta, in his "place of lofty *repose*," is the precise equivalent of the Egyptian Re, who "*resteth* on his high place." That both gods are identified with the planet Saturn further confirms the striking parallel. What, then, of the great god Shamash, whom one expert after another identifies with the solar orb alone? The prevailing consensus cannot hide the fact that Shamash, like Ninurta and Anu, is addressed as the planet Saturn ("Shamash is Saturn," say the astronomical texts). Thus Shamash sends forth his light from the immovable centre or "midst" of heaven:

Like the midst *of heaven may he shine!*[222]

O Shamash . . . suspended from the midst *of heaven.*[223]

O Sun-god, in the midst *of heaven . . .*[224]

I have cried to thee, O Sun-god, in the

midst *of the glittering heaven.*[225]

Let there be no misunderstanding as to the literal and concrete meaning of the "midst." It is, states Robert Brown, the stationary centre, "that central point where Polaris sat enthroned."[226] Accordingly, in the symbolism of the ziggurat and other "sun" temples, Shamash occupies the "*summit* house," the "*fixed* house," or the "house of rest."[227] The top of the ziggurat, a symbolic model of the Cosmos, is the "light of Shamash," and the "heart of Shamash," denoting (in the words of E. G. King) the pivot "around which the highest heaven or sphere of the fixed stars revolved."[228]

The Babylonian tradition of the polar sun has been preserved up to the modern era in the tradition of the Mandaeans of Iraq. In their midnight ceremonies these people invoke the celestial pole as *Olma I'nhoara*, "the world of light." With the following words they beseech the polar god: "In the name of the living one, blessed be the primitive light, the Divinity self-created." This polar god, states one observer, is the "*primitive sun* of the star-worshippers."[229]

India

The Hindu Dhruva, whose name means "firm," stands at the celestial pole—"a Spot blazing with splendour to which the ground is firm, where is fixed the circus of the celestial lights of the planets, which turn all around like oxen round the stake, and which [the Spot] subsists motionless."[230] What remains to be explained by mythologists is that the "obviously solar" god Surya "stands *firmly* on this safe *resting place.*"[231] Surya, states V. S. Agrawala, "is himself at rest, being the immovable centre of his system."[232] And just as the Egyptian

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222 Sayce, *op. cit.*, 177, note 1. [Emphasis added.]

223 Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 387. [Emphasis added.]

224 Sayce, *op. cit.*, 177, note 1. [Emphasis added.]

225 *Ibid.*, 173. [Emphasis added.]

226 *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, 191.

227 Jastrow, *op. cit.*, 638-41. [Emphasis added.]

228 *Akkadian Genesis*, 24, quoted in O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 78.

229 Nuttall, *Fundamental Principles*, quoting an article in the London *Standard*, October 19, 1894, entitled "A prayer meeting of the star-worshippers." [Emphasis added.]

230 *Bhagavata Purana*, Chapter 4.

231 Eggeling, *Satapatha-Brahmana IV*, 3, 4, 9. [Emphasis added.]

232 Agrawala, *Sparks from the Vedic Fire*, 82-83.

primeval sun "rises and sets" in one place, Surya occupies *samanam dhama*—"the same place of rising and setting."[233]

Another name for the stationary sun is Prajapati. "The sun in the centre is Prajapati: he is the horse that imparts movement to everything," writes Agrawala.[234]

Figure 5. Resting Brahma.

Figure 6. Resting Buddha.

The motionless Dhruva, Surya, and Prajapati compare with the light of Brahma, called the "true sun," which, "after having risen thence upwards . . . rises and sets no more. It remains alone in the centre."[235] Brahma, observes Guenon, is "the pivot around which the world accomplishes its revolution, the immutable centre which directs and regulates cosmic movement."[236]

In fact, every Hindu figure of the primeval sun appears as the fixed mover of the heavens. The Hindu Varuna, "seated in *the midst* of heaven," is the Recumbent," the "axis of the universe."[237] "*Firm* is the seat of Varuna," declares one of the Vedic hymns.[238] In him "all wisdom centres, as the nave is set within the wheel."[239] One

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233 Velanker, *Rigveda Mandala VII*, 147.

234 Agrawala, *op. cit.*, 66.

235 Chatterji, *The Bhagavad Gita*, 145.

236 *Études sur l'Hindouisme*, 19.

237 Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Vol. I, 96; Coomaraswamy, *A New Approach to the Vedas*, 8, 60-61, 92, note 71. [Emphasis added.]

238 Perry, *Lord of the Four Quarters*, 122. [Emphasis added.]

of Varuna's forms is Savitar, the "impeller." While the rest of the universe revolves, the impeller stands firm. ". . . Firm shalt thou stand, like Savitar desirable."240

Occupying the same resting place is the supreme god Vishnu "who takes a *firm* stand in that resting place in the sky."241 The location is the celestial pole, called "the exalted seat of Vishnu, round which the starry spheres forever wander."242 Vishnu is the polar sun or central fire: "fiery indeed is the name of this *steadfast* god," states one Vedic text.243

A fascinating and archaic form of the Hindu great god is Aja Ekapad, originally conceived as a one-legged goat, the support and mover of the universe. Observes Agrawala: "The question arises as to the meaning of *ekapad.* It [Aja] is called *ekapad* or one-footed for the reason that *ekapad* or one-footed denotes the absence of motion."244 Agrawala calls this supreme being or principle that of "Absolute Static Rest."245 "The principle of Rest," writes the same author, "is inexhaustible and the source of all motion."246

The sacred ground occupied by the Hindu great god is the "middle place," "the steadfast region," or "the motionless heaven."247 In the Brahmanist tradition it is *Nirvana*, "the Supreme Resting Place" at the centre and summit.

To the Buddhists this is the nave of the cosmic wheel, the throne of the Buddha himself. It is *acalatthana*, the "unmoving site," or the "unconquerable seat of *firm seance.*"248 The Buddha throne crowned the world axis, states Coomaraswamy.

China

The ancient Emperor on High, according to a universal Chinese tradition, stood at the celestial pole. Chinese astrologers, according to Schlegel, regard the polar god as "the Arch-Premier . . . The most venerated of all the celestial divinities. In fact the Pole star, around which the entire firmament appears to turn, should be considered as the Sovereign of the Sky."249 The supreme polar god was Shang-ti, the first king. His seat was "the Pivot" and all the heavens turned upon his exclusive power.

Raised to a first principle, the polar god became the mystic *Tao*, the motor of the Cosmos. The essential idea is contained in the very Chinese word for Tao, which combines the sign for "to stand still" with the sign "to go"

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239 *Ibid.*, 121-22.

240 Whitney, *Atharva Veda*, XIX, 45.4.

241 Eggeling, *Satapatha Brahmana*, III, 6.3.15. [Emphasis added.]

242 Quoted in de Santillana and von Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill*, 138.

243 Velanker, *op. cit.*, 219. [Emphasis added.]

244 *Op. cit.*, 40, citing *Rig Veda* X.82.6.

245 *Ibid.*, 70.

246 *The Thousand Syllabled Speech*, Vol. I, 112.

247 Eggeling, *Satapatha Brahmana* II.5.1.14; see also note 4, p. 36; Coomaraswamy, *A New Approach*, 68.

248 Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 42-43. *Ibid.*, 43-45, 52, 55.

Comparable to the firmly seated position of the Egyptian great god is the position of the "resting" or "meditating" Buddha. The Buddha "sat himself down cross-legged in an unconquerable position, from which not even the descent of a hundred thunderbolts at once could have dislodged him." Quoted in Campbell, *Oriental Mythology*, 16. [Emphasis added.]

249 Schlegel, *op. cit.*, 507.

and “head.” The Tao is the Unmoved Mover, the god One who goes or “moves” while yet remaining in one place.

Chinese sources proclaim the Tao to be the “light of heaven” and “the *heart* of heaven”250 that is, the central sun. “Action is reversed into non-action,” states Jung. “Everything peripheral is subordinated to the command of the centre.”251 Thus the Tao rules the “golden centre,” which is the “Axis of the World,” according to Erwin Pousselle.252

Yet while many writers have observed the polar station of the Chinese supreme power, few indeed have noticed that Chinese astronomers identify this central sun as the planet Saturn. Saturn, according to the astronomical texts, is “the Pivot,” his primeval seat the celestial pole. It is Saturn, states Schlegel, who imparts motion to the universe.253

One of the few writers to notice Saturn’s connection with the pole is de Saussure, who tells us that Chinese astronomy places the planet in the Centre, around which all secondary elements and powers revolve: “. . . the Centre represents the Creator, Regulator of the entire Cosmos, the Pole, seat (or throne) of the supreme Divinity.”254 Saturn, states de Saussure, “is the planet of the centre, corresponding to the emperor on earth, thus to the polar star of Heaven.”255

The Americas

In southern Peru the Inca Yupanqui raised a temple at Cuzco to the creator god, the authentic sun, who was superior to the sun we know. Unlike the solar orb he was able to “rest” and “to light the world from *one* spot.” “It is an extremely important and significant fact,” writes Nuttall, “that the principal doorway of this temple opened to the north.” (Since the north celestial pole is not visible from Cuzco, 14-deg below the equator, Nuttall assumes that this tradition of a polar sun was carried southward.)256

In Mexico a form of the central light is Tezcatlipoca, who, though said to “personify the Sun,” yet resides at the pole—as does Quetzalcoatl, the “sun,” first king, and founder of civilization, who Nahuatl priests say inaugurated the era of “the Centre.”257

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250 Jung, *Alchemical Studies*, 20. [Emphasis added.]

251 *Ibid.*, 25.

252 “Seelische Führung in Lebenden Taoismus,” in *Yoga und Meditation im Ostem und im Westen*, 193.

253 *Op. cit.*, 631.

254 “La Série Septenaire, Cosmologique et Planétaire,” 342.

255 “Origine Chinoise de la Cosmologie Iranienne,” 305.

256 *Op. cit.*, 161, emphasis added.

257 *Ibid.*, 42, 56, 95; Burland, *The Gods of Mexico*, 94.

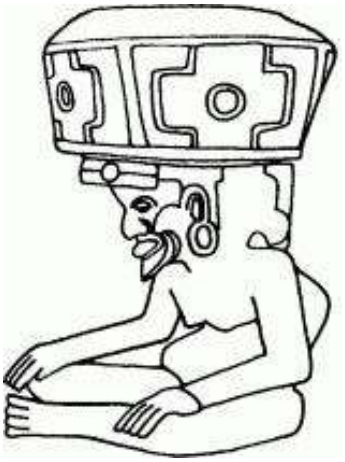

Figure 7. Resting Xiuhtecuhtli.

Burland tells us that, among the Mexicans, "the nearest approach to the idea of a true universal god was Xiuhtecuhtli," recalled as the Old, Old One who enabled the first ancestors to rise from barbarism. Xiuhtecuhtli appears as the *Central Fire* and "the *heart* of the Universe." "Xiuhtecuhtli was a very special deity. He was not only the Lord of Fire which burnt in front of every temple and in the middle of every hut in Mexico, but also *Lord of the Pole Star.* He was the *pivot* of the universe and one of the forms of the Supreme Deity."258 An obvious counterpart of this central sun is the Mayan creator god Huracan, the "*Heart* of Heaven" at the celestial pole.

The Pawnee locate the "star chief of the skies" at the pole. He is the "star that stands still." Of this supreme power they say, "its light is the radiance of the *Sun* God shining through."259

The American Indians also have a counterpart to the Egyptian Still Place and the Hindu Motionless Heaven. A Zuni account relates that long ago the *heart* of the great father Kian'astepe *rested* in a sacred spot called the *Middle Place.* Here, at the cosmic centre, the holy ancestors "sit perfectly still."260 It does not take a great deal of imagination to see that this is, once more, the stationary pivot of the heavens.

From one land to another one encounters the same connection of the great father or primeval sun with the celestial pole. To the traditions cited above, one might add the following:

In the Persian *Zend Avesta* the sun god Mithra occupies the summit of the world axis, a fixed station "around which the many stars revolve."261 The common identification of Mithra with the Zoroastrian Zurvan/Saturn cannot be ignored.

Iranian cosmology, as reported by de Saussure, esteemed the celestial pole as the centre and summit of heaven, where resided "the Great One in the middle of the sky." who is equated with *Kevan*, the planet Saturn.262 Throughout the ancient Near East, states H. P. L'Orange, the "King of the Universe" appears as a central sun, "the Axis and the Pole of the World."263

The Greek sun-god Helios, in an old tradition, resides at the centre of the Cosmos, with the heavenly bodies revolving around him.264 Upon evaluating the imagery of Helios in Homer's *Odyssey*, Butterworth concludes

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258 *Op. cit.*, 77; see also p. 80. [Emphasis added.]

259 Alexander, *op. cit.*, 95-96. [Emphasis added.]

260 Stevenson, *The Zuni Indians*, 46, 80.

261 Darmesteter, *The Zend Avesta*, Miher Yast XII, 49-50.

262 "Le Système Cosmologique," 292-3.

263 *Studies in The Iconography of Cosmic Kingship*, 13.

264 Bloch, "Le Symbolisme Cosmique et les Monuments Religieux dans l'Italie Ancienne," 24-25; see also L'Orange, *op. cit.*, 29.

that the mythical sun remained always at the zenith, the celestial pole.265 What gives meaning to the tradition is the identity of Helios and the planet Saturn, as earlier documented.

"According to Jewish and Muslim Cosmology," writes A. J. Wensinck, "the divine throne is exactly above the seventh heaven, consequently it is the pole of the Universe."266 Thus Isaiah locates the throne of El (originally the planet Saturn) in the farthest reaches of the north.267

The alchemists regarded the pole as the dwelling place of "the central fire," the motor of the heavens. ". . . The whole machinery of the world is drawn by the infernal fire at the North Pole," notes Jung.268 An alchemical text proclaims: "At the Pole is the heart of Mercurius, which is the *resting place* of his Lord."269 "Most important of all for an interpretation of Mercurius," Jung writes, "is his relation to Saturn. Mercurius *senex* [the *aged* Mercurius] is identical with Saturn."270

Records of numerous nations around the world stand as a collective witness to a strange, yet consistent idea—an idea which finds no explanation in the heavens we know. Global myths insist that when the first civilizations rose from barbarism a brilliant light occupied the celestial pole. This steadfast light was the ancient sun-god, repeatedly identified as the planet Saturn, the Universal Monarch.

Is it possible to reckon with this extraordinary memory in terms acceptable to the modern age? Mythologists and historians of religion always assume that archaic astral traditions, though filled with imaginative explanations, nevertheless refer to the very celestial order which confronts us today. The entire Saturn myth challenges this long-standing assumption. Could it be that Saturn's image as the polar sun—however strange, however difficult to reconcile with present physical theory—represents true history?

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265 *Op. cit.*, 28-29.

266 "*The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth*," 55.

267 Isaiah 14: 13-14.

268 *Aion*, 135.

269 Jung, *Alchemical Studies*, 209, note 8. [Emphasis added.]

270 *Ibid.*, 226.

IV: Saturn's Cosmos

The ancients preserved more than mythical-historical accounts of Saturn's rule. From one section of the world to another the planet-god's worshippers drew pictures of the Saturnian configuration, and these pictures become the universal signs and symbols of antiquity.

In the global lexicon of symbols the three most common images are the enclosed sun , the sun-cross , and the enclosed sun-cross . It appears that every ancient race revered these signs as images of the preeminent cosmic power. In Mesopotamia and Egypt the signs occur in the earliest period.

Prehistoric pottery and rock carvings from Crete, China, Scandinavia, Africa, Russia, Polynesia, and the Americas suggest that numerous ancient rites centered on these simple forms—which became the most venerated images in the first hieroglyphic alphabets.

But what did these signs signify to the ancients? With scarcely a dissenting voice, scholars routinely tag them as solar symbols. They tell us that such renderings of the sun are perfectly natural (that is, they *must* be "natural" ways of representing the sun because one sees the signs everywhere!)

Though everyone seems to agree on the solar origins,271 many disagree as to what the signs depict. In the image , does the outer band represent a parhelion (atmospherically caused halo around the sun)? Or does it stand for "the circle of the sky"? Some commentators suggest that the outer circle is itself the sun, leaving open the question of the meaning of the enclosed dot.272

Similarly, in evaluating the sign , the experts cannot agree whether the four arms of the cross denote rays of the sun or four quarters of the world. It is also said that the four arms depict spokes of an imagined sun wheel rolling across the sky each day.

Is it necessary to point out that these differences of opinion immediately throw into question the common claim that the signs are *natural* solar emblems? So long as the meaning is uncertain one can hardly state that a symbol is a *natural* expression of anything. Yet surely those experts who debate the significance of the "sun" symbols must wonder why the ancients, *with one accord*, inscribed the same images the world over.

Consider the relatively complex sign . The basic form occurs along with many variants on every continent. Whatever it may signify, it is more than a simple drawing of the sun. If it is a solar image, then one must assume not only that the sun worshippers around the world instinctively adopted the sun to a more complicated abstract form, but that every ancient sun-cult drew upon the same abstraction. Why?

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271 B.L. Goff, for example, discusses the sign (here) as an "explicit" solar form in Mesopotamia. Why explicit? Because "it is surrounded by rays." Goff, *Symbols of Prehistoric Mesopotamia*, 22.

272 This has, in fact, become the popular explanation of the Egyptian *Aten*.

The enclosed sun-cross is not an abstraction. It simply records what the ancients originally *saw*. It is a literal drawing of the *polar sun*, passed down from earliest antiquity: the image of Saturn, the Universal Monarch.

Rarely do archaeologists, seeking to interpret the widespread "sun" symbols, consult ancient mythology. Yet the myths explain the symbols, and the symbols illuminate the myths. Largely overlooked by archaeologists are the hundreds upon hundreds of myths and liturgies focusing on the cosmic images , , and . Ancient sources reveal a world-wide concern with a concrete celestial form—an *ideal* configuration identified as the great god and his heavenly dwelling. The subject is not the present world order, but the former. The symbols, legends, and sacred hymns attempt to preserve a memory of Saturn and the primeval Cosmos.

The Enclosed Sun

When Saturn appeared alone in the cosmic waters, a brilliant band congealed around the god as his celestial "island." This band was the original Cosmos, often portrayed as a revolving egg, a coil of rope, a belt or a shield enclosing the central sun.

The sacred hymns and creation legends of ancient Egypt say that when the creator arose from the cosmic sea, a vast circle appeared around the god, forming the original Place—"the place of the primeval time," or "the Province of the Beginning."[273] This primeval dwelling was the "island of *Hetep* [Rest],"[274] a steadfast, revolving enclosure. Egyptian texts of all periods offer vivid images of this enclosure on the waters—called "the golden Pai-land," the "Island of Fire," "the divine emerging primeval island," or "the island emerging in Nun [the cosmic waters]."[275]

Diverse sources agree that the island of creation stood at the cosmic centre and that it was the residence of the creator himself, the central sun. Thus, while Osiris is the "motionless heart" in the Island of Fire, Atum, the stationary Heart of Heaven, is "the Sole One who is alone . . . , who made his heart in the Island of Fire."[276]

In the following pages I shall attempt to show that Egyptian sources depict the band as *something seen*—the god's visible dwelling in heaven. Indeed, the Egyptians—and all other ancient races—*were so preoccupied with the Saturnian band that they elaborated a vast symbolism presenting the same enclosure under wide-ranging mythical forms.*

Yet standard treatments of ancient myth and religion say little or nothing of the enclosure. And even less do writers on the subject seem aware that the pictograph of the enclosure sun is a straightforward portrait of Saturn and his legendary home.

It is not for want of evidence that the experts have missed this connection. The only obstacle is the *a priori* world view of the researchers themselves—who presuppose that all references to the primordial light god can only signify the solar orb. In connection with our sun today, the ancient language of the enclosure will appear esoteric or meaningless.

Of Re, the *Coffin Texts* say, "We honour him in the sacred enclosure."[277] Re is the "sender forth of light into his Circle."[278] "I am the One who is in his Circle," he announces.[279] What could this terminology signify in

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273 Reymond, *The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple*, 12-13, 65-67, 86.

274 *Ibid*., 12-13.

275 *Ibid.*, 185; Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 38, note 21.

276 Faulkner, *The Coffin Texts*, 100.

277 Lacau, *Traduction des Textes des Cercueils du Moyen Empire*, 30.

278 Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol, I, 340.

relationship to the solar orb? Since our sun possesses no perceptible relationship to an enclosure or circle, the translators will likely ignore the terms or contrive a complicated metaphysical concept to explain them.

Though the Egyptian hieroglyph for Re is , and though this sign, taken literally, immediately illuminates the foregoing references, no one seems inclined to take the sign—or the texts—literally.

To the enclosure round the sun the Egyptians gave the name *Aten*, a term familiar to every student of Egyptian religion. "Spacious is your seat within the Aten," read the *Coffin Texts*.280 One of Re's titles is *am aten-f*, the "dweller in his Aten." Both Atum and Horus possess the same title. Similarly, the *Book of the Dead* invokes Osiris: "O great god who livest in thy divine Aten."281 Since the Egyptian pictograph of the Aten is or , it should be clear that the term refers to a circular enclosure housing the sun-god.

But from the beginning Egyptologists have attempted to explain the Aten as the sun itself, translating the word as "the solar disk." Rather than clarify the Egyptian concept, such a translation only confuses the sun-god with his celestial dwelling. One Egyptologist, for example, states that the Aten was the sun, and that the sun was conceived as "the window in heaven through which the *unknown* god, 'Lord of the Disk,' shed a portion of his radiance upon the world."282

Having identified the Aten with the solar orb, the writer concludes that the god who resides in the Aten is an invisible god. Budge voices a similar opinion when he calls the Aten "the material body of the sun wherein dwelt the god Re"283 as if Re himself were an invisible power and the solar orb the visible emanation and dwelling of the god.

It is impossible to reconcile such metaphysical interpretations with the concrete imagery of the Aten in Egyptian texts. The Aten is indeed the visible "window in heaven" and the "body of the sun," but this "window" or "body" is surely not the solar orb. It is, as the Aten sign ( ) indicates, a *band* housing the sun. And the primeval "sun" is Saturn.

The same misunderstanding occurs in the case of the Egyptian terms *khu* and *khut.* The terms refer to "the circle of glory" or the "brilliant circle," conceived as a fixed *place*—"the place where the [primeval] sun shines forth." Though the Egyptians regarded this circle as the visible emanation of the creator, standard translations render *khu* as "Spirit" or "Soul" (implying an unseen power) and *khut* as "horizon" (suggesting the place of the solar sunrise). Both translations violate the literal sense of the words: literally, the *khut* (written with the sign) is the "Mount of Glory."

The circle of the *khu* or *khut* was the "glory," "halo," "nimbus," or "aureole" of the creator—what the Hebrews called the *Shekinah* (the encircling "glory" of God) and the Greeks *stephanos* (circle or crown of "glory"). Indeed, every figure of the creator stands within the luminous ring, always considered as his own emanation. The band is not only the god's "halo," but his *dwelling* at the cosmic centre.284 "In diagrams of the Cosmos"

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279 Lacau, *op. cit.*, 43.

280 Faulkner, *op. cit*., 43.

281 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 382. *Tem* is also "the dweller in his disk." *Ibid.*, 94.

282 Piankoff, *The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 11. [Emphasis added.]

283 *Gods*, Vol. II, 69.

284 The Hebrew Shekinah was a "cloud of glory," recalled as the visible dwelling of God. Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 138-40.

observes J. C. Cirlot, "the central space is always reserved for the Creator, so that he appears as if surrounded by a circular or almond-shaped halo."285

Figure 8. Mithraic Saturn, with surrounding halo.

Figure 9. Japanese Buddha, with surrounding halo.

If one accepts the immediate sense of the archaic terminology, the enclosure was no abstraction. It was Saturn's shining band. The Babylonian Anu—Saturn—was "the High One of the Enclosure of Life,"286 his dwelling "the brilliant enclosure." (Here, too, the enclosure becomes the place of the primeval "sunrise.")287 The Maori of New Zealand know the planet Saturn as Parearau, whose name conveys the meaning "circlet" or "surrounding band." From this name of Saturn, Stowell concluded that the natives could *see* the present Saturnian ring with the naked eye—something all astronomers know to be impossible today.288

When the African Dogon draw Saturn they depict it as an orb within a circle—a fact which Robert Temple, in his book *The Sirius Mystery*, cites as evidence for seemingly inexplicable Dogon astronomical knowledge (which he contends was introduced to the ancients by extra-terrestrial visitors!). But no one asks whether the order of the solar system may have changed, allowing for a *once-visible* Saturnian band.

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285 *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 40. This is what a Babylonian text recalls as the "veil of gold in the midst of heaven"; the texts compare it to a crown. Sayce, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, 274. To the Hindus this was the Khvarenah, "the Awful Royal Glory." Perry, *Lord of the Four Quarters*, 143.

286 Brown, *Researches into the Origins of the Primitive Constellations*, 185.

287 Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, Vol. I, 13. The Babylonian sun-god "rises" within the enclosure, but "sets" within it also. Sayce, *op. cit*., 171, 513. The subject is the central sun.

288 Best, *The Astronomical Knowledge of the Maori*, 35-36.

The Lost Island

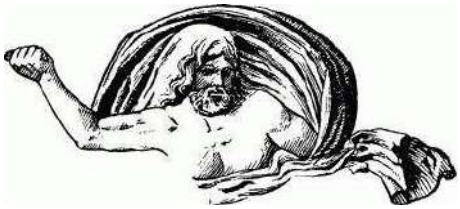

Figure 10. Classical artists often portrayed the great god's "halo" or "aura" as an arched mantle.

For the primeval enclosure the Egyptians employed a variety of interrelated symbols. The circle of the *khu* or Aten was nothing other than the Island of Fire, the Province of Beginning. A single spell of the *Coffin Texts* thus identifies Re as "the noble one who is at the land of the Island of Fire," but also calls Re the god "who is in his Aten."289 The subject is not two different enclosures but one enclosure under two different titles.

And this identification of the central sun as an *enclosed* or *encircled* god appears to throw light on the endlessly repeated myth of the lost island. What the Greeks called Ogygia (the island of Kronos/Saturn in the farthest north) occurs under many different names the world over. The white island, the floating island, the revolving island—may not these primeval dwellings simply echo the Saturnian enclosure? One recalls the words of Dionysius of Halicarnassus:

Haste to the realms [rings] *of* Saturn

shape your course,

Where Cotyle's famed island wandering floats

On the broad surface of a sacred lake [the Abyss].290

Not of our earth, the lost isle floated in the sea of heaven. Japanese legends recall the ancient cradle of life as Onogora, a floating island ("the drifting land") which congealed on the waters. This was the isle of the Congealed Drop. Its location, states a native commentator, was originally the North Pole, from which it eventually moved to its present position.291 O'Neill properly relates the Japanese isle to the floating island of Delos raised from the sea by Poseidon. Another name for this island was Ortygia, which O'Neill connects with the Latin *verto*, Sanskrit *vart*, "to turn."292 Answering to the same tradition are the Floating Islands of the *Argonautica*, called the Strophades, or "Islands of Turning."

In the voyages of the Celtic divine hero Maelduin the adventurer encounters a fabulous isle in the midst of the sea: "Around the island was a fiery rampart, and it was ever wont to turn around and about it."293

Examples are too numerous to receive elaborate treatment here: the primeval, revolving islands of Rhodes and Corcyra, spun on the cosmic spindle; the primeval isle of the *Cyclos*, "wheel," which gave its name to the Cyclades; the "white island" of Zeus "in the midst of the sea"; the floating Hindu white island (*Shweta-dwipa*) at the polar centre; the lost Toltec "white island" of Tula, the centre of the world.294

Without exception, the shining, floating, revolving islands are esteemed as the place where history began and seem to answer to the same archaic tradition as the Egyptian Province of the Beginning, the revolving

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289 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 102.

290 Ant. Rom. lib. i cap. 23 quoted in Faber, *A Dissertation on the Cabiri*, 66. [Emphasis added.]

291 O'Neill, *The Night of the Gods*, 32.

292 *Ibid.*, 32.

293 Massey, *Ancient Egypt*, 373.

294 See O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 32-35, 615*ff*. Guenon, *Formes Traditionelles et Cycles Cosmiques*, 38; *Le Roi du Monde*.

enclosure around the central sun. Is it possible that the ancients *saw* the mythical island—that the isle was not a geographical location, but a visible band enclosing Saturn? One must consider several closely related images, which also imply a visible band around the ancient sun-planet.

The Egg

A hymn from the Egyptian *Coffin Texts* reads:

I was he who came into existence as circle,

he who was the dweller in his egg.

I was the one who began everything, the dweller in the primeval waters.[295]

Here the reference is to Atum as the creator of the egg, but other traditions say of the great god Ptah that he "created the egg which proceeded from Nun [the cosmic waters]."[296]

In the *Book of the Dead* the light god shines as "the mighty one within the egg."[297] "Homage to thee, O thou holy god who dwellest in thine egg."[298]

As the stationary light god "turns round about" his egg revolves around him. "I am the god who keepeth opposition in equipoise as his Egg circleth round."[299] "O thou who circlest round, within thine Egg."[300] Atum, as governor of the revolving egg, is the lord of Time, for "time is regulated by the motion around the egg," Clark tells us.[301]

Similar to the egg of Atum is the revolving sphere produced by the Orphic Chronos (Time, who is *Kronos*, Saturn):

The great Chronos fashioned in the divine

Aether [the fiery sea] *a silver egg.*

And it moved without slackening in a vast circle.[302]

To this revolving egg compares that of the Society Islands' creator Ta'oroa, "the ancestor of all the gods," who sat "in his shell in an egg revolving in endless space."[303]

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295 Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, 74.

296 Major Sandman Holmberg, *The God Ptah*, 119.

297 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 577.

298 *Ibid.*, 493.

299 Renouf, *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 108.

300 *Ibid.*, 133.

301 *Op. cit.*, 56.

302 Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, 137, citing Orphic Hymn 71.

303 Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 413.

Figure 11. Ptah, fashioning the World Egg upon a potters wheel.

The same egg appears in Hindu myth, set in motion by the central sun Prajapati.304 Mircea Eliade finds recollections of the cosmic egg in Indonesia, Iran, Phoenicia, Latvia, Estonia, West Africa, Central America, and the west coast of South America as well.305

Certainly, none of the later traditions improve upon the Egyptian texts which describe the egg as the enclosure round Atum-Re. But one can hardly fail to be impressed by the consistency of the tradition. And even the alchemists, much of whose teachings descended from Egypt, remember the connection of the egg with Saturn. They recall the egg as a fiery enclosure on the primordial sea—a circle with a "sun-point" in the centre (*i.e.*,). This "world-egg is the ancient Saturn," they say.306

Is not this cosmic egg the band which the Egyptians called Aten? "O thou who art in thine egg, who shinest from thy Aten," reads the *Book of the Dead*.307 Just as the Egyptian god-king is "the ruler of all that the Aten encircles," so also is he "powerful in the egg" or "ruling in the egg."308

In celebrating the primeval egg, the priests commemorated the island of beginnings. Budge summarizes the Egyptian tradition: "The first act of creation began with the formation out of the primeval watery mass of an egg, wherefrom issued the light of the day, *i.e.*, Re."309 Concerning the identity of this egg and the island or "Province of the Beginning," the texts from the temple of Edfu remove all doubt: another name for the Province of the Beginning was "*the Island of the Egg.*"310 Egyptian sources thus suggest this equation:

Aten (enclosure of the central sun)=Cosmic Egg=Primeval Island.

The Bond. To reside within the Aten is to reside "in the coil" or "in the cord." The Hieroglyphs depict the Aten as a cosmic bond or knot, indicated by an enclosure of rope with the ends tied together (*shen*). (Thus *shen*, "coil," "bond," may be written with the determinative , the Aten sign.) The bond signifies both a *boundary*—distinguishing the unified domain of the Universal Monarch from the rest of space—and *order*,

304 Agrawala, *Sparks from the Vedic Fire*, 23*ff*.

305 *Op. cit.*, 413-415.

306 Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 46-47; *Alchemical Studies*, 82.

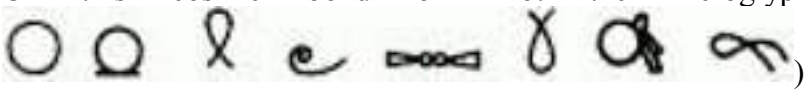
307 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 104.

308 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 44.

309 *Gods*, Vol. I, 291, summarizing the research of Brugsch.

310 Reymond, *op. cit.*, 66.

marked by ceaseless, stable revolution round the central sun. It is the "bond of regularity" (*shes maat*), protecting the god-king from the surrounding waters of Chaos. Accordingly, the Egyptian king, considered as the incarnation of the Universal Monarch, takes up symbolic residence within the celestial cord, acquiring the great god's power as "ruler of all that the Aten encircles." The priests indicated this power of the terrestrial ruler by placing his hieroglyphic name within the *shen*-coil . And in order to accommodate longer names they eventually expanded the coil to an ovoid form, which yielded the familiar royal cartouche in which the names of all later kings were inscribed.

Of this cosmic bond or knot the hieroglyphics offer many signs (among them ). But each possesses the same root meaning as a protective boundary defining the original dwelling of the creator in heaven. The symbols convey the sense "to circumscribe," "to set the bounds." The creator, as the Measurer, prescribes the limits and measures out the sacred enclosure by "stretching the cord" round about, producing a unified dwelling (the primeval island), protected from the evils of Chaos and darkness.311

That the ancient mythmakers conceived Saturn's enclosure as a cord binding together the god's dwelling will explain why the Babylonian Ninurta, Saturn, holds the *markasu* or "bond" of the Cosmos. Langdon writes: "The word *markasu*, 'band,' 'rope,' is employed in Babylonian philosophy for the cosmic principle which unites all things, and is used also in the sense of 'support,' the divine power and law which hold the universe together."312 The Orphic poet thus celebrates Saturn (Kronos) as "Father of the blessed gods as well as of man . . . you who hold the *indestructible bond* . . ."313

It is easy for contemporary writers to speak of Saturn's bond as an invisible principle holding "the universe together," but in the original symbolism one *sees* the bond as the shining boundary of *Saturn's dwelling* (the true Cosmos). It was not in Egypt alone that the cord signified the "edge" or "border." What the Greeks called *peirata*, "rope" or "bond," possesses the additional meaning "boundary." The Latin *ora*, "cord," means also "edge."314 A similar meaning attaches to the "noose" of the Hindu Varuna and Yama. The bond delimited and protected the sacred space occupied by the Universal Monarch, and its connection with the sign links it directly with Saturn's island-egg.

The Garment. Mythmaking imagination also appears to have conceived the Saturnian band as the god's girdle, collar, or belt. "I am the girdle of the garment of Nu, shining, shedding light," states a hymn from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead.*315 The great god is "the Girdled and the Mighty one, coming forth triumphantly."316 A common hieroglyphic determinative of the "girdle" or "collar" is the cord sign .

The Shield. All creation legends involve a struggle between the light god and the destructive powers of the Abyss (Chaos). The mythic enclosure provides the god's defense against the turbulent waters which originally prevailed. The Egyptian enclosure, states Reymond, "had the function of protecting the sacred area from the evil coming from outside."317 Aten was one of the numerous Egyptian names for this defensive rampart in

311 On the rite of "stretching the cord" see *ibid.*, 239, 308*ff.*

312 *Semitic Mythology*, 109.

313 De Santillana and von Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill*, 132-133, citing Orphic Hymn 13. [Emphasis added.]

314 Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*, 317.

315 Budge, *The Papyrus of Ani*, 182.

316 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 203.

317 *Op. cit.*, 239.

heaven: “The Aten makes thy protection,” states the *Litany of Re.*[318] The cosmic egg serves as the same fortress: “I am Horus . . . , whose protection was made within the egg; the fiery blast of your mouths [the fiery water of Chaos] does not attack me.”[319]

The band of the Aten , as the protective boundary, was the great god’s “shield,” fending off what the texts call “the fiends” of disorder. It is this mythic history of the band which explains why, in the hieroglyphs, the shield sign signified sacred space in general. All who resided within the shield’s enclosure occupied the safe and stable ground.

Figure 12. Mexican divinity holding a revolving cord-shield.

Cord, belt, and shield converge. The great father wears the cord as a girdle: it protects him as a shield—not merely in Egyptian symbolism, but in the international language of symbols. Why, for example, did divine figures from Babylonia to Greece to Mexico wear a sacred belt of rope, and why was the belt conceived as an impenetrable defense? Mexican illustrations of the divine shield show it to be *nothing more than a circle of rope.* It was certainly not practical experience which suggested the magical powers of a shield so conceived! But the mythical imagery of the enclosed sun is quite sufficient to explain such anomalies: the great god’s shield and the celestial cord signified one and the same protective enclosure.

If the ancients actually saw a band around Saturn, it is clear that the enclosure fostered diverse but interrelated mythical interpretations. A literal reading of Egyptian and other texts will confirm an extraordinary equation:

Enclosure of the central sun=primeval island=cosmic egg=cord (bond)=girdle (belt, collar)=shield.

Concerning the overlapping images much more needs to be said. The signs and the myths become comprehensible only when one relates them to the heavens of *ancient* times. Celestial island, egg, cord, girdle, and shield mean nothing more than a shining, revolving enclosure around the great god. Was this band real or imaginary? The question can be answered by exploring certain other aspects of the enclosure.

The Cosmos And The Divine Assembly

The sign of the enclosed sun *portrays a circle of secondary lights revolving about the stationary god and forming Saturn’s Cosmos.* The mystic traditions of the great father present an apparent paradox: he is the god One, the *solitary* god in the cosmic sea; yet he is the All, embracing a company of lesser gods.

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318 Piankoff, *The Litany of Re*, 52.

319 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 126.

This is not a contradiction. In the first phase of creation the god brought forth a circle of secondary lights: *these issued directly from the god to become his visible limbs.* It is the fundamental character of the god One—the Heaven Man—to unite in a single "body" all the secondary powers of the Cosmos.

In Pythagorean, Neoplatonist, and Gnostic systems the primal figure is "the One, the All," whose symbol is the enclosed sun . Hindu mysticism offers the latter sign as the image of the primordial unity, and the same interpretation is repeated by the alchemists.

Today one naturally thinks of "the All" as *boundless* space. The terms which translators render as Cosmos, heaven, firmament, sky, or universe suggest to the modern mind a limitless arena of the sun, moon, planets, and constellations. But the original meaning of the All is *bounded* space—a *place* (*the* place, or place *par excellence*). The *Cosmos* simply means the province of the god One, who, as Lord of the All, governs and is the "whole and its parts." Having overlooked this restricted sense of the terminology the translators replace concrete meanings with ambiguity (in the guise of modern-sounding metaphysics). The once-visible dwelling of the central sun thus becomes, in the translations, "all existence."

Almost without exception the translators fail to notice 1) that the creator was Saturn, recalled as the central sun; and 2) that the sign of the central sun and the sign of the All were the same image . The true Cosmos was Saturn's enclosure. And nothing else is necessary in order for one to understand the ancient characterization of Saturn as the Heaven Man whose "body" *encompassed* the Cosmos. When Hildegard Lewy reports that the Sumero-Babylonian priests of Saturn regarded the planet-god as "the embodiment of the whole universe" the modern mind boggles: could the ancients have been so frivolous as to identify Saturn—the present, barely discernible point of light—with "the whole universe"? The answer is that Saturn was not a mere speck of light, but a gigantic globe at the polar centre; and the "universe" did not mean the open heavens but Saturn's dwelling, the *an-ki* or band of the Cosmos. Saturn's towering form "filled the an-ki."

Zoroastrian texts describe the original Cosmos as the body of Zurvan (Time, Saturn), a revolving wheel called the Spihr, which remained *ever in the same position.* The fall of the stationary wheel coincided with the collapse of the primordial era.320 The image suggests, not unlimited "space," but the tangible configuration of the enclosed sun .

Accordingly, the later mystic traditions, as reviewed by Jung, describe the image as the cosmic form of Adam, the Anthropos, the Original Man or Man on High—identified as Saturn.321 Always the "body" of this primal man means "Cosmos."

The interrelated myths and symbols of Saturn's Cosmos receive remarkable clarification in the creation accounts and the liturgies of ancient Egypt. Though I briefly touched on the Egyptian texts in earlier discussions of the Heaven Man, amplification is necessary.

The Circle Of The Gods

Whether called Atum, Re, Osiris, Horus, Khepera, or Ptah, the Egyptian great god sits enthroned within a circle of secondary deities, satellites of the central sun. The gods are the Glorious Ones, Never-Resting Ones, or Living Ones; the Circle of Fire, Divine Chiefs, Apes of Dawn, Holy Ancestors, or Revolving Ones; the Followers of Horus, the Followers of Re, or the Followers of Osiris.

While the divine assembly possessed many names, its singular character stands out in the texts of all regions. There is no Egyptian company of the gods other than that which revolves round the central sun—a fact uniformly ignored by writers on Egyptian religion.

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320 Zaehner, *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, 111*ff.*

321 Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 11, 12, 44*ff.*

The texts repeatedly confirm the same relationship of the assembly to the great god:

This is the Circle of gods about Re and about Osiris.[322]

The satellites of Re make their round.[323]

Thy followers circle about.[324]

Re maketh his appearance . . . with the cycle of gods about him.[325]

His Ennead [circle of gods] *is around about his seat.*[326]

I am Re amidst his Ennead.[327]

Go ye round about me, O ye gods.[328]

Hail to you, Tribunal . . . O you who surround me . . .[329]

Divine is your name in the middle of the gods.[330]

These gods shall revolve round about him.[331]

Glorious is your sah [brilliant form] *in the midst of the living Ones.*[332]

These are the "stars who surround Re."[333]

When it is light all faces adore him, the Brilliant One, he who arises [shines] *in the midst of his Ennead.*[334]

The dilemma for solar mythology is obvious: seeing the references to the great god in the above lines, no one would think of denying that the subject is a *visible power* (which all presume to be our sun). But the descriptions of the god's revolving companions are equally explicit. To what visible powers do *they* answer? No circle of lights appears to revolve about the body we call sun today.

Egyptian descriptions of the celestial assembly take us back to the remote age, separated from the present by a wide chasm. Every Egyptian cult possessed mythical accounts relating to the birth of the divine assembly in remote times. Despite numerous versions of the legend, it is impossible to ignore the coherent pattern. From a study of the numerous fragments, I offer the following reconstruction and interpretation of the myth.

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322 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 51.

323 *Ibid.*, 258.

324 Piankoff, *The Wandering of the Soul*, 12.

325 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 264.

326 Piankoff, *The Wandering of the Soul*, 27.

327 Piankoff, *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 34.

328 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 189.

329 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 4.

330 Hassan, *Hymnes Religieux du Moyen Empire*, 100.

331 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 644.

332 Hassan, *op. cit.*, 54.

333 *Pyramid Text* 732.

334 Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri*, 14.

In the primordial epoch the creator first appeared in the Abyss, alone, wandering, without a resting place. "I found no place to stand—I was alone," states the god.335

After his appearance the god "uttered words" and these utterances possessed a *visible form* as the *kheperu*, the first things created. The *kheperu* "came forth from my mouth."336 These visible "words" flowed from the creator as the waters of Chaos, the sea in heaven upon which the creator floated or wandered. To reckon with the tradition in its own terms one must think of the primordial sea as a fiery "ocean of words" in heaven, emitted by the god in a prolonged and resounding explosion.

An Egyptian term virtually identical to *kheperu* is *pautti*, often translated as "primeval matter." The *pautti* issued directly from the creator in the form of radiant speech, forming a fiery, watery mass. The creator brought forth this primeval matter and, paradoxically, "produced himself" in it ("I produced myself from the primeval matter which I made").337

For a time the creator wandered in the luminous sea but eventually came to rest at a point of stability, the cosmic centre. Two events followed: an island congealed around the god as his "place of rest," and the circle of the gods came into being, embracing the creator. The two events are synonymous.

From the *unorganized* sea of words—the *kheperu* or *pautti*—the creator brought forth an *organized* dwelling. He "gathered" the enclosure together as a barrier against the watery Chaos which he himself had created. The fiery particles of the newly formed enclosure composed the circle of the gods. That is, the gods stood on the enclosure's "edge" or "border"—the "shore" of the celestial isle . In one text these are "the gods who belong to the Shore. They give an island to the Osiris NN."338 This was the Cosmos, formed by the "Council of the gods who surround the Island of Fire."339

Vital to this interpretation of the myth is the identity of the divine assembly with the *kheperu* or *pautti* "uttered" by the creator. The secondary gods are themselves the shining "words" or "names" spoken by the creator and organized into a revolving circle. *Kheperu* thus means "the revolving ones," while *pautti* signifies "the primeval ones," who inhabit and give form to the Island of Fire.340

What, then, do the texts mean when they say that the *kheperu* or *pautti*, though erupting from the creator, "produced" the great god? The answer is clear-cut: the circle into which the constituent particles (visible words) congealed was the creator's "body." The god One "collected" or "gathered together" *his own limbs* ("I united my members"). He "produced himself."341

The *Coffin Texts* depict the creator alone in the primeval sea:

> [I was] *he who had no companion when* [or until] *my name came into existence . . .*
>
> *I created my limbs in my "glory"*
>
> *I was the maker of myself . . .*342

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335 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 309.

336 *Ibid.*, 308.

337 *Ibid.*, 314.

338 Piankoff, *Wandering of the Soul*, 87.

339 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 192.

340 Reymond, *op. cit.*, 119.

341 Thus, the Litany of Re invokes the god as "the One Joined Together."

342 Clark, *op. cit.*, 74.

Literally, the limbs which the god produced are "my limbs of my khu." The phrase is of sweeping significance.

An Egyptian sign of the *khu* was the hieroglyph . The term, in explicit reference to the creator's "circle of glory" (halo, aura, Aten), means at once "words of power" and "brilliant lights." Depicted by the hieroglyph is the island of creation, around which are ranged the secondary deities (*khu*) produced through the creator's "speech." In bringing forth this divine assembly the creator became the maker of his own body. "O Khepera . . . whose body is the cycle of the gods forever," proclaims the *Book of the Dead.*343 The same texts speak of "the souls of the gods who have come into being in [or as] the members of Osiris."344

The entire symbolism focuses on the celestial form of the enclosed sun . Individually, the fiery lights which compose the enclosure (island of the Cosmos) are the creator's "limbs" (plural), but as a unified circle, the assembly forms his "body" (singular). Correspondingly, the respective lights are the creator's multiple "names" or "words" ("the names of his limbs"), while as an organic whole (the All) the circle is the god's *singular* "Name." When the hymn cited above states that the god was alone "until my name came into existence," the meaning is concrete, not abstract. The creator remained alone until he brought forth the circle of the *khu*, his visible Name in heaven.

That the god's Name was his tangible dwelling—his circle of glory—is a fact absolutely essential to a comprehension of the enigmatic symbolism. "I have *made firm my name*, and have preserved it that I may have life through it."345 The reference is to the enclosure of life, the Island of Fire "made firm" at the stationary cosmic centre, when the creator ceased to wander in the Abyss. Thus the hieroglyphic determinative of "name" (*ren*) is the *shen* sign , the sign of the celestial enclosure or circle of the Aten. *To possess a* "*name*" *is to reside within the* Aten . A single hymn from the *Book of the Dead* provides a remarkable summary of the related symbols:

I am the great god who came into existence by himself.

This is Nu who created his names paut neteru as god.

Who, then is this?

It is Re, who created the names of his limbs.

There came into existence in the form of the gods

who are in the following of Re . . .

Who, then, is this?

It is Tem [Atum] *in his* Aten.346

The self-generated god in the above lines is Nu, whose hieroglyph identifies him as both the source and the substance of the cosmic waters. The text says not only that the great god "created his names" but that these "names" are the *paut neteru*—the circle of the gods.

But why is the assembly called the paut, or primeval matter? It is because the revolving gods erupted directly from the creator, eventually forming the organized enclosure. The secondary gods, as words or names spoken by the creator, composed the god's own "limbs," so that the text can say the god "created the names of his

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343 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 39.

344 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 561.

345 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 116. [Emphasis added.]

346 Budge, *The Papyrus of Ani*, 29.

limbs." That these "came into existence in the form of the gods who are in the following of Re" means simply that they formed the revolving assembly.

Who, then, is this god who shines within the circle of his own limbs? "It is Atum in his Aten." The priests could not have stated more emphatically the equation of the celestial assembly and enclosure of the primeval sun . Here is the formula set forth by the Egyptian texts:

Cosmos (enclosure of the central sun)=primeval matter (sea of words) in its organized form=circle of the gods=limbs or body of creator=creator's visible Name.

That the circle formed by the divine assembly is the cosmic *dwelling* of the creator is a truth affirmed not by one local cult alone, but by all streams of Egyptian ritual. Below I list a few of the Egyptian words that connect the assembly with the enclosure of the central sun:

Khu. In the creation, as noted above, the *khu* erupt from the creator as "words of power" or "brilliant lights." This "circle of glory" the body of Osiris or Re composes the god's celestial home, the Aten . Thus *khus* means "to fashion a dwelling."

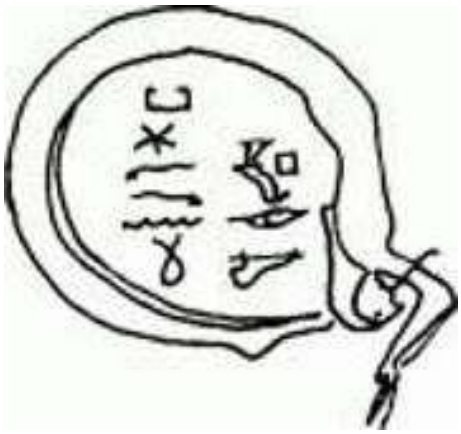

Figure 13. The body of Osiris forming the circle of the Tuat, the Cosmos.

Tuat. The term refers to the "resting place" of the creator at the summit. The hieroglyphic symbol of the Tuat shows the light god within a celestial band which the texts equate with the circle of the Aten, "The Mysterious Soul, which rests in its Aten, rests in the Tuat of Re."347 In the hymns and in art, the Egyptians depicted the Tuat as the *body* of Osiris or Re. But Tuat means also "the circle of the gods"; the enclosure, the "body" of the sun-god and the divine assembly are synonymous.

Shen, shenit, sheniu, shenbet. The *shen* signs and portray the central sun's enclosure as a cord of rope—the bond of the Cosmos. *Shen* means "to revolve," in reference to the revolving band of the Aten. (The *shen* sign and the Aten sign function as interchangeable glyphs.) Hence, the *sheniu* is the great god's cosmic "chamber" while the *shenit* are the "chiefs" or "nobles" on high who travel the circuit round the *shen.* *Shenbet*, meaning "body," is the *bet* or "place" marked out by the *shen.* Again, enclosure, "body," and assembly converge.

Tchatchat. The *tchatchat* are the "chiefs" or "heads"—the council of gods revolving around the stationary sun. But *tchatchat* also signifies "boundary," "enclosure," or "holy domain." The circuit traversed by the chiefs is the boundary of the celestial enclosure .

347 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 29; see also Piankoff, *The Litany of Re*, 29.

Rer, reri, rert. While *rer* means "to revolve or encircle," *rert* means "men"—the inhabitants of the primordial domain. The *reri* are "the revolving ones" (comparable to the *kheperu*), who collectively enclose the sacred space. Accordingly, *rer* possesses the additional meaning "the enclosed domain."

Paut, pat. The secondary gods are the *pautti*, the "primeval matter" which (as stated above) congealed into the creator's revolving dwelling. Paut thus signifies the creator's "body." Obviously related are the *pat*, the primeval gods whose name conveys the sense "to go round like a wheel or in a circle." It is no coincidence that the hieroglyphic determinative of the *pat* is an egg : the circle around which the *pat* revolve is the egg of the Cosmos, and this egg is the "body" of the god Seb.

Tchet, tchetu. While *tchet* means "to speak," *tchetu* signifies "words," "things spoken." In the creation the great god uttered visible "words" in the form of the lesser gods. That the creator's words became his dwelling is reflected in the term *tchet*, the "house" or "chamber" of the great god. *Tchet* also means "body."

Shes, shesi. An Egyptian name of the cosmic bond is *shes*, written with the hieroglyph . The Tuat (, dwelling of Re or Osiris) is the *shes maat*, the "bond of regularity" (or of stable, ceaseless revolution). The texts also speak of celestial *shesi*, divine "warriors" who protect the great god. They "protect" the god because, collectively, they form the defensive rampart, the cosmic shield.

The language and symbolism of the celestial assembly reveal an underlying idea connecting the separate traditions. The secondary gods are not merely ill-defined "companions," or "assistants" (as so many Egyptologists seem to assume); rather, they possess concrete form as the enclosure of life, the very enclosure which the priests celebrate as the island of beginnings, the revolving bond, or the cosmic egg (all figures of the Cosmos).

The Cosmos, in other words, has nothing to do with "all existence." The concept relates to an *organized domain*—"the whole and its parts"—fashioned by the creator out of previously unorganized cosmic debris (primeval matter). An Egyptian word for the unified domain is *temt*, which means "all" or "complete" and also "to collect," "to gather together." Clearly related is the word *Temtiu*, one of the names of the secondary gods. It is the secondary gods themselves that the creator "collects" or "gathers together" to form the cosmic island.

Pertaining to the same root concept are the terms *tema*, "to unify, join together"; *temi*, "shore," "bank," or "border"; and *temen*, "all," "totality." The *unified All* (Cosmos) is contained within the border of the enclosure, and the *border* is the *shore* of the cosmic island .

The Saturnian band is thus the *pathway* traversed by the secondary gods. The gods revolve around the shore, or around the bond, or around the egg. "Every god who is on the border of your enclosure is on the path . . . ," states a *Coffin Text*.348

The testimony could not be more explicit. The road traveled by the secondary gods is the *uat*, the "way" or "path," denoted by the glyph . But the same glyph signifies the *tcher*, "boundary." The *path* of the gods and the *boundary* of the unified Cosmos (the All) are synonymous. Thus the phrase *er tcher* ("to the *tcher*" or "to the boundary") means "all," "the whole." The great god, as *Neb-er-tcher*—"he who rules to the boundary"—is the ruler of the whole, lord of the revolving Cosmos. It is the same thing to say that he governs "all that the Aten [ ] encircles." The whole range of images challenges orthodox interpretations.

But the symbolism of the Cosmos and divine assembly reaches far beyond Egypt. Do not all supreme gods sit enthroned within the circle of secondary divinities? Ninurta, Kronos, El, Yama, Huang-ti and every other Saturnian figure has his "sons," "councilors," "spies," "followers," "assistants," or "warriors" seated round about him. The Mesopotamian sign is a self-evident image of the celestial assembly. It is this Cosmos—

348 Lacau, *op. cit.*, 33.

not boundless space—which Saturn's "body" encompassed. What the mystics knew as "the universe" organized within Saturn's "bond" or "cord" (Babylonian *markasu*) becomes meaningful only as the visible Saturnian band, or circle of the gods.349

The Great Mother

The sign of the enclosed sun *also portrays Saturn, the generative Seed, within the womb of the mother goddess. As the female personification of the Cosmos, the great mother is inseparable from Saturn's "body."*

The mysteries of the mother goddess give rise to an endless debate. What is the fact in nature which will explain the cosmic union of Isis and Osiris, Tammuz and Ishtar or Kronos and Gaea? One scholar after another puzzles over the goddess' varied forms, finding her everywhere and nowhere. If to one writer she is the fertile earth around us, to another she is the moon and to another "the universe," the "sky," or the morning star. The diverse interpretations seem to suggest that there were many goddesses with a singular figure—the heavenly consort of the great father. Here, for example, is one statement, offered as the words of the Egyptian goddess Isis to Apuleius:

*. . . My name, my divinity is adored throughout the world, in divers manners, in variable customs, and by many names. For the Phrygians that are the first of all men call me the Mother of the gods of Pessinus; the Athenians, which are sprung from their own soil, Cecropian Minerva; the Cyprians, which are girt about by the sea, Paphian Venus; the Cretans, which bear arrows, Dictynian Diana; the Sicilians, which speak three tongues, infernal Prosperpine; the Elusinians, their ancient goddess Ceres; some Juno, others Bellona, others Hecate, others Ramnusie . . . ; and the Egyptians, which are excellent in all kind of ancient doctrine, and by their proper ceremonies accustomed to worship me, do call me by my true name, Queen Isis.*350

In their cosmic rites the Egyptians seemed unwilling to distinguish Isis from such local figures of the great mother as Nut, Hathor, Mut, or Neith. Each local goddess bore identical or similar epithets ("the Eye of Re," "the mother of Re," "the Lady of the Holy Land," etc.).

But if the ancients acknowledged a common personality of the goddess, what was that personality's underlying trait? There is one universal attribute: the great goddess possesses the form of an enclosure—a circle or womb—housing and "giving birth to" the great father. Neumann perceived this trait when he described the goddess' "elementary character" as "the Great Round" or "the world-containing and world-creating uterus."351 From his exhaustive study of the great mother G. S. Faber concluded that *every goddess* appears as a protective enclosure sheltering the great father. Of this truth there is no shortage of evidence.352

The god Tammuz sits within the womb of Tiamat, "the mother of the hollow." "Mother-womb" is the epithet of the Sumerian goddess Gula, while Ishtar's name means "womb."353 Hindu sources describe the great

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349 It can hardly be doubted that the assembly in heaven served as the prototype of all sacred assemblies on earth: just as the king represented the Universal Monarch, his councilors or assistants answered to the circle of secondary divinities around the central sun. Among the Greeks, notes Onians, "a circle appears to have been the ritually desirable form for a gathering." *Op. cit.*, 444. Similarly, the Sumerian GIN, "to assemble," possesses the sense "to circle, turn, enclose." Langdon, *A Sumerian Grammar*, 216. This aspect of the sanctified assembly is, of course, universal. (Even today we speak of a circle or band of assistants, followers, or companions without really knowing why.)

350 Campbell, *Occidental Mythology*, 43.

351 *The Great Mother*, 227.

352 *The Origins of Pagan Idolatry*.

353 Allegro, *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*, 92.

mother as the *yoni* or "womb" and the great father as "he enveloped in his Mother's Womb."[354] Agni is the male god "shining in the Mother's eternal womb."[355]

Similarly, the Norse Odin is "the dweller in Frigg's bosom."[356] In Orphic doctrine the receptacle housing the great father is the goddess Vesta. The Gnostics remembered the old god as the "Ancient of Days who dwelt as a babe within the womb."[357] Among the Maori the great mother is the "Shelter Maid" or "Haven Maid."[358]

Descriptions of the primeval womb show that the ancients recall the goddess as a *visible* band—what Hindu texts call the "golden womb,"[359] and Babylonian "the jeweled circlet" (a title of Ishtar).[360] The imagery pertains directly to the enclosed sun . In Hinduism the latter sign depicts "the male seed-point or *bindu* in the cosmic womb," states Alan Watts.[361] "The Father is like the centre (*Nabhi*) of the circle and the Mother the circumference (*Paramanta*)," notes Agrawala.[362] The same male-female symbolism of the enclosed sun occurs in European stone carvings discussed by V. C. C. Collum.[363] That the Hebrews regarded the *Shekinah* (the creator's encircling "aura," "anima," or "glory") as "the Mother"[364] leads to the same conclusion: the great god's *halo* was his own spouse. Accordingly, the Tibetan ritual invokes the great god as "the centre of the Circle, enhaloed in radiance, embraced by the (divine) Mother."[365]

This conception of the great mother receives compelling support from ancient Egyptian sources. The Egyptian sun-god has his home within the womb of his mother and consort, the "Great Protectress."[366] Of Re, the *Book of the Dead* proclaims, "Thou shinest, thou makest light in thy mother."[367] Elsewhere Re appears as the sun "in the womb of Hathor."[368]

Osiris shines forth from the enclosure of his mother Nut: "Homage to thee, King of kings, Lord of lords, Prince of princes, who *from the womb of Nut* hath ruled all the world."[369] The abode of Horus is his mother Hathor,

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354 Agrawala, *The Thousand Syllabled Speech*, 115.

355 Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 23.

356 MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, 174.

357 Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 281.

358 Best, *op. cit.*,

359 Eggeling, *The Satapatha Brahmana*, Part II, 394.

360 Brown, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 268.

361 Preface to Perry, *op. cit.*

362 *Thousand Syllabled Speech*, 127.

363 "Die Schöpterische Mutter Göttin," 221-324.

364 Patai, *op. cit.*, 239.

365 Evans-Wentz, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, 127.

366 *Pyramid Text* 838.

367 Budge, *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 4.

368 Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth*, 48.

369 Budge, *From Fetish to God*, 30; see also *Pyramid Text* 1607. [Emphasis added.]

whose name means "the House of Horus." And the goddess Nekhebet is said to personify the primeval abode of the sun.370

As earlier noted, the Egyptians portrayed the celestial dwelling as the *shen* bond . But this enclosure was really the womb of Nut, states Piankoff.371 (Thus the goddess Shentit takes her name from the *shen* bond.)

The mother goddess was not our earth, not the open sky, not the moon, but the *dwelling of the central sun*, the enclosure of the Aten : "My Aten has given me birth," states the god-king.372 This direct connection of the mother goddess with the sun's enclosure will explain why the Aten sign , though serving as the glyph of Re, also denotes "mistress," in reference to the god's celestial consort.373 The god's mistress was his own emanation, his halo of "glory" or "splendour." The priests who invoked the great god's *khut* or "circle of glory" also celebrated the *goddess* Khut, who was the same circle.

Residing within the enclosure, the central sun is the shining seed impregnating the great mother. "I am indeed the Great Seed," declares Re.374 "O Re, make the womb of Nut pregnant with the seed of the spirit which is in her," reads a hymn of the *Pyramid Texts*.375 The same texts celebrate "the womb of the sky with the power of the seed of the god which is in it."376 And again, "Pressure is in your womb, O Nut, through the seed of the god which is in you."377

In his coming forth within the cosmic womb the sun "copulates with" or "impregnates" the mother goddess, and this relationship expresses itself in the language. The Egyptian *nehep* means "to copulate" while *nehepu* means "to shine." Though *beka* denotes "the coming forth" of the sun, the same word means "pregnant." Thus the union of the primal pair is renewed daily (or with each "dawn" of the central sun).

But the same coming forth receives mythical interpretation as the *birth* of the light god. Nut is at once Re's *spouse* and his *mother*, who "bears Re daily":378

*I am exalted like that venerable god, the Lord of the Great House, and the gods rejoice at seeing his beautiful comings forth from the womb of Nut.*379

*His birth is wonderful, raising up his beautiful form in the womb of Nut.*380

*Hail, Prince, who comest forth from the womb.*381

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370 Brugsch, *Religion*, 324.

371 *Mythological Papyri*, 6.

372 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 92.

373 See, for example, the use of the sign (here) in Budge, *Papyrus of Ani*, 71.

374 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 258.

375 *Pyramid Text* 990.

376 *Pyramid Text* 532.

377 *Pyramid Text* 1416.

378 *Pyramid Text* 1688.

379 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 148.

380 Budge, *From Fetish to God*, 416.

381 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 260.

Conception and birth are thus confused. The impregnating Seed (father) is also the Child. It is this equation which yields Re's title as "Man-Child."[382] He is the prototype of "the son who impregnates his mother," or the "father who gives birth to himself."

But the confusion does not end here, for the mother goddess, as the great father's encircling aura, is herself the *emanation* of the masculine power. The solitary god brings forth the womb of heaven unassisted. In this sense the goddess is the great father's "daughter," so that if one considers the entire range of possibilities, three relationships to the goddess—father, husband, and son—are united in one figure.

Imagery of this sort runs through all of the religious texts of ancient Egypt. Amon-Re is "he who begets his father."[383] The goddess Hathor becomes "the mother of her father and the daughter of her son."[384] Atum-Kheprer "brought himself into being upon the thigh of his divine mother."[385] In the ritual of the Karnak temple Re's "daughter" Mut encircled "her father Re and gave birth to him as Khonsu."[386] The same goddess is "the daughter and mother who made her sire."[387]

Equation of father and son is explicit in the case of Osiris and his "son" Horus. *The Pyramid Texts* describe Osiris shining "in the sky as Horus from the womb of the sky."[388] "The king is your seed, O Osiris, you being potent in your name of Horus who is in the sea."[389] The gods, in the *Book of the Dead*, recall the ancient time of Horus "when he existed in the form of his own child."[390]

Because the terrestrial king symbolically acquires the attributes of the Universal Monarch, the rites show the local ruler uniting with the mother goddess and reproducing himself within the cosmic womb. He announces that he has been "fashioned in the womb" of the great mother,[391] and after invoking "the womb of the sky with the power of the seed of the spirit which is in it," then proclaims: "Behold me, I am the seed of the spirit which is in her."[392] "O Nut . . . it is I who am the seed of the god which is in you."[393]

Frankfort deals with the subject at length, showing that the king's impregnation of the mother goddess and simultaneous birth in the womb was central to Egyptian ritual. The king "enters her, impregnates her, and thus is borne again by her"[394] exactly as the great god himself.

If the king receives his authority on earth through personification of the Universal Monarch, it is through the same identification that he attains the heavenly abode of the goddess upon death, taking up his residence within the sheltering womb as an Imperishable One. In a hymn to Nut, King Pepi beseeches the goddess, "Mayest

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382 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 180.

383 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 177.

384 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 431.

385 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 134.

386 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 180.

387 *Ibid.*, 177.

388 Budge, *Osiris: the Egyptian Religion of Resurrection*, 68.

389 *Pyramid Text* 1505.

390 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 337.

391 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 42.

392 *Pyramid Text* 532.

393 *Pyramid Text* 1416-17.

394 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 177.

thou put this Pepi into thyself as an imperishable star."[395] "Mayest thou transfigure this Pepi within thee that he may not die."[396]

Frankfort comments: ". . . the notion of a god who begets himself on his own mother became in Egypt a theological figure of thought expressing immortality. The god who is immortal because he can re-create himself is called Kamutef, 'bull of his mother.'"[397] The king aspires to duplicate the feat of the Universal Monarch, giving birth to himself in the womb of Nut. Though the divine marriage and its imitation in kingship ritual involve many complexities and enigmas, the underlying theme remains clearly defined. Symbolically, the king has his home in the cosmic womb; he simultaneously impregnates the goddess and is "born" by her. The source of the ritual is celestial, for it reenacts the First Occasion when the great father, the fiery Seed, took to wife the band of "glory" which congealed around him. The sign of the primordial union is everywhere before us but rarely recognized. It is the sign of the enclosed sun .

Womb And Thigh

In connection with the symbolism of the mother goddess one notes that the "womb" is generally synonymous with the "thigh" or "lap." When ancient reliefs depict the god or king on the lap of the great mother, they refer to the primeval union, in which the father of the gods resides within the goddess' protective enclosure.

An Assyrian tribute to Assurbanipal reads: "A meek babe art thou, Assurbanipal, whose seat is on the lap of the Queen of Ninevah [Ishtar]."[398] Thus the Sanskrit yoni, the female enclosure and dwelling of the great father, may be translated either "lap" or "womb." The Latin word for "thigh"—*femen*, *feminis*—means "that which engenders."[399] A similar connection occurs in Egypt, where *Khepesh*, "thigh," means the womb of Nut housing Osiris or Re.

Many gods—in Hindu, Greek, and European myth—are thus "born from the thigh," like the Egyptian Kheprer who "brought himself into being upon the thigh of the divine mother."[400]

This overlapping symbolism of womb, lap, and thigh will be met more than once in the following sections.

Womb And Cosmos

To identify the mother goddess as the band of the enclosed sun is to equate the goddess with Saturn's Cosmos, the revolving company of the gods. The goddess Nut is "the representation of the cosmos," states Piankoff.[401] Thus while the Egyptian *khut* signifies the "circle of glory" formed by the secondary gods, Khut also means the mother goddess. And though the *shenit* are the "princes" in the divine circle, the goddess is *Shentit;* both words derive from the *shen*, the bond of the Cosmos.

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395 *Ibid.*, 177; see *Pyramid Text* 782.

396 *Ibid.*, 177.

397 *Ibid.*, 180.

398 Ward, *The Cylinder Seals of Western Asia*, 154.

399 Onians, 182.

400 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 134.

401 Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri*, 6.

Figure 14. The Man-Child on the lap of the mother goddess. **(a)** Cyprus;

Figure 14. (b) Egypt;

Figure 14. (c) India;

Figure 14. (d);

Figure 14. (e) British goddess Gwen.

The religious texts confirm the equation. "He is the one who cometh forth this day from the primeval womb of them [the secondary gods] who were before Re," reads the *Book of the Dead.*402 "I have come forth between the thighs of the company of the gods."403 What the *Book of the Dead* calls "divine beings of the Thigh"404 means the celestial assembly, the secondary gods who collectively form the womb of cosmic genesis.

But the interrelated symbolism does not stop here. Every Egyptian priest knew that the mother goddess was the revolving egg housing the central sun. Indeed, the hieroglyphic image of an egg at the end of the divine name means "goddess." Of Osiris the goddess Isis declares: "His seed is within my womb, I have molded the shape of the god within the egg as my son who is at the head of the Ennead."405 The god within the womb is the god within the egg, who is the god ruling the Ennead (circle of gods).

By the same equation the womb becomes the garment or belt girdling the sun: the deceased king prays that he may be *girt* by the goddess Tait,406 or announces that "My kilt which is on me is Hathor."407 In the case of

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402 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 265.

403 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 594.

404 *Ibid.*, 392.

405 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 125.

406 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 205.

407 *Pyramid Text* 108.

the goddess Neith the womb becomes the shield. (The shield is the hieroglyph for Neith.)[408] Though the symbols of the primeval enclosure differ, each is presented as a form of the great mother, whose entire character answers to the visible Saturnian band .

The Hermaphrodite

In the *Great Magical Papyrus of Paris*, dated around the first half of the fourth century A.D., appears the Oracle of Kronos. The recommended prayer invokes Kronos as "Lord of the World, First Father," but also bestows on the god the peculiar title "Man-Woman."[409] Kronos is Saturn, the primeval sun. To what aspect of the god did this title refer?

In Saturn the primal male and female principles unite, yielding the *hermaphrodite*, or *androgyne.* Few of the preeminent deities of antiquity are free of this duality. The Sumerian Anu, Ninurta, Tammuz, and Enki; the Hebrew El; the Hindu Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva; the Iranian Zurvan; the Mexican Quetzalcoatl—all reveal a female dimension. Their spouse is never wholly separated from their own body.

The Egyptians esteemed Atum as "that great He-She,"[410] while celebrating Amen as the "Glorious Mother of gods and men."[411] The Egyptian word for this primeval unity is *Mut-tef*, or "Mother-Father." From what has been established in the previous pages concerning the symbolism of the enclosed sun there can be little doubt as to the concrete meaning of the *Mut-tef.* The word signified the organized Cosmos,[412] the central sun and its enclosure, considered as the male and female parents united in a single personality: the great father's *body* was also the god's *spouse*, the womb of heaven.

This duality finds expression in the Egyptian term *khat*, which may be translated either "body" or "womb." The man-child Horus, who dwells in the womb of Hathor, is *Khenti-Khati*, at once "the dweller in the body" and "the dweller in the womb." *The Litany of Re* proclaims that "the khat [body] of Re is the great Nut," the mother goddess.[413]

Egyptian artists showed the *body* of Osiris forming the circle of the Tuat, the abode of Osiris or Re.[414] But every student of Egyptian religion knows that the Tuat, house of rest, was the womb of Nut.

The hermaphrodite, then, personifies the original Cosmos, which means Saturn and his visible dwelling . G. S. Faber, in his comprehensive study of ancient ritual, notes that the great father ("the Intelligent Being") "was sometimes esteemed the animating Soul and sometimes the husband of the Universe, while *the Universe was sometimes reckoned the body and sometimes the wife of the Intelligent Being*: and, as the one theory supposed a union as perfect as that of the soul and body in one man, so the other produced a similar union by blending together the husband and wife into one hermaphrodite."[415]

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408 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 451.

409 De Santillana and von Dechend, *op. cit.*, 147.

410 Clark, *op. cit.*, 41.

411 Énel, *Les Origines de las Genese et l'Enseignement des Temples de l'Ancienne Egypte*, 13, note 4.

412 *Ibid.*, 11*ff.*

413 Piankoff, *The Litany of Re*, 54.

414 Schafer, "Altägyptische Bilder der Auf- und Untergehenden Sonne," 20.

415 *Origins*, 165. [Emphasis added.]

With Faber's assessment it is impossible to disagree, so long as one remembers that to the ancients, the "universe" (Cosmos) meant Saturn's home, not a boundless expanse. That Saturn's Cosmos acquired a dual character as the god's "body" and as his "spouse" is sufficient to explain the primordial Father-Mother.

The hermaphrodite or androgyne, Eliade tells us, is "the distinguishing sign of the original totality [*i.e.*, the All]." Its customary form is "spherical," he notes.416 We thus arrive at the following equation:

Band of the enclosed sun=Cosmos (island, egg, cord, girdle, shield, circle of the gods)=body of the great father=womb of the great mother.

416 *Patterns*, 423. See also Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return*.

V: The Holy Land

Ancient ritual the world over conceived the terrestrial ruler as the incarnation of the Universal Monarch. By the same principle each local city or kingdom became a transcript of the god-king's primeval domain. The sanctified territory on earth was laid out according to a *cosmic* plan, revealed in remote times.

On this priority of the cosmic dwelling all major traditions concur. A celestial Sumer and Akkad preceded the organization of the actual Mesopotamian kingdoms. And such settlements as Eridu, Erech, Babylon, and Lagash took their names from a heavenly city occupied by the central sun.

Every Egyptian town—Heliopolis, Herakleopolis, Memphis, Abydos, Thebes, Hermopolis—mirrored a prototype, a "city in which the sun shone forth in the beginning." So did Egypt as a whole, according to the ritual, reproduce the dwelling gathered together and unified by the creator.

Hebrew tradition knew a heavenly Jerusalem which gave its name to the terrestrial city; and what the Hebrews claimed of their city, the Muslims claimed of Mecca. The Chinese declared their kingdom to be a copy of the celestial empire, and each capital city imitated the same plan.

In unison, diverse traditions of the Near East, Europe, Asia, and the Americas recall a Holy Land *par excellence*, founded and ruled by the creator himself. From this Saturnian kingdom every nation took instruction in the ideals of kingship and in the proper organization of the sacred domain.

The Mother Land

In the creation myth the great god raised a circular plot of "earth" from the cosmic waters. The enclosure was Saturn's paradise—the kingdom of heaven—appearing as a vast wheel or throne turning about the stationary god.

Saturn's Earth[417]

In seeming reference to the fertile soil around us, the Latin poet Virgil celebrates the "mother of harvests" and "the mighty mother of men." But he gives the great goddess of fertility an intriguing title: "Saturn's Earth."

Why *Saturn's* Earth? The curiosity increases when one notices that the Sumerian An, Enki, and Ninurta—all identified as Saturn—rule "in the *Ekur*." The translators render *Ekur* as "earth."[418] So also did Chinese astronomy deem Saturn the planet of the "earth,"[419] while the Phoenician Saturn is said to have dwelt "in the centre of the earth."

The Egyptian "earth god" is Seb (or Geb). That is, writes Budge, "the earth formed his body and was called the 'house of Seb.'"[420] But if Seb's body was the earth, why did the Greek historian Plutarch translate Seb as Kronos (Saturn)?[421]

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417 Virgil, *Georgics*, ii. 173*ff*.

418 Jensen, *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, 189*ff*.; Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 99.

419 De Saussure, "Le Systeme Cosmologique Sino-Iranienne."

420 *The Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol. II, 94.

What connection of the planet Saturn and the "earth" might have justified this identity? Of course the common English translation, "earth," naturally suggests to the modern mind our planet suspended in space. But to the ancients no such detached view was possible. They knew only a terrestrial *region*, however large or small. In archaic ritual, the terms which experts translate as "earth" mean literally "land," "place," "province"; and the only region which the ancients considered worthy of sanctification as the "land" was their *own* unified state or nation—all else belonging to the "barbarians."

But every sacred "land" organized around a religious-political centre proclaimed itself a copy of the *primeval* dwelling in heaven. Thus the Egyptian *ta*, often rendered as "earth," refers first and foremost to the heavenly province of the creator—the *ta ab* ("pure land"), *ta nefer* ("beautiful land"), *ta sheta* ("mysterious land"), *ta ankhtet* ("land of life"), or *ta ur* ("great land"). Such terms are synonymous with *ta Tuat*, the "land of the Tuat," the cosmic dwelling of Osiris or Re. In naming terrestrial Egypt *ta*, the Egyptians gave their homeland the name of the cosmic "place" *par excellence.*

Ta signifies the cosmic dwelling "gathered together" by the creator. That the Egyptians conceived the *ta* as the "body of Seb" corresponds with everything we have learned of the primeval enclosure. Of equal significance is Seb's hieroglyphic symbol, the egg . The myths say that the egg of Seb is that from which the sun first shone forth (*i.e.*, it is the same as the revolving egg of Atum, the egg of the Cosmos). This so-called "world egg" has no connection with our planet.

Nor did the Sumerian *Ekur*, "earth," denote our planet. As observed by Jensen, Langdon, and others, the *Ekur* appears as the celestial home of the creator.422 Åke Sjöberg and E. Bergmann state the identity bluntly.423 The Sumerians knew this celestial domain as the *ki*—"the place" or "the land"—invoked as *ki-sikil-la*, the "pure land" or "pure place," and *ki-gal*, "great land."424

The Sumerian *ki* was the Assyrian *Esara*, the supreme "place." Rather than familiar geography, the term refers to the created land of *cosmic* beginnings. Thus *Esara*, according to Jensen, was used with special reference to "the earth as it appeared *at the creation.*"425 Equivalent is the "celestial land" of Hindu myth,426 or the "pure land" of the Buddhists.427 No greater mistake could be made than to seek a *geographical* location of this lost land.

Ancient cosmology locates the primordial "place," not "down here," but at the celestial pole, the centre and summit. In Egyptian thought, states Clark, the celestial pole is "that place" or "the great city." Here dwells the "Master of the Primeval Place."428 When the god in the *Coffin Texts* proclaims, "I am the creator who sits in the supreme place," the reference is to the polar abode, Clark tells us.429 Iranian astronomy drew on the same tradition when it designated the celestial pole as *Gah*, which means simply "the place," the dwelling of "the Great One in the Middle of the Sky."430

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421 Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, XII.

422 Jensen, *op. cit.*, 188*ff*.; Langdon, *op. cit*., 102.

423 *The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns*, 136.

424 Van Dijk, "Le Motif Cosmique dans la Pensée Sumérienne," 49.

425 *Op. cit.*, 199. [Emphasis added.]

426 Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, Vol. II, 21.

427 Guenon, *Le Roi du Monde*, 95.

428 Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, 58-59, 222.

429 *Ibid.*, 58-59.

430 De Saussure, "Origines Chinoise de las Cosmologie Iranienne," 303.

In Iranian cosmology it is *Saturn* who occupies the polar *Gah*, "place"—just as it is Saturn who, in the form of the polar An, rules the Sumerian "pure place." Hence, one could properly call this domain "Saturn's Land," or "Saturn's Province." And this simple relationship enables us to understand why the ancients, who regarded their own sacred territory as a duplication of the celestial dwelling, extolled the fertile soil as "Saturn's Earth."

The Egyptian Paradise

A clarification of the Egyptian concept will help to illuminate the general tradition. One of the features of the Egyptian *ta*, "land," which has encouraged its identification with *our* earth is its mythical character as a garden or field of abundance. To reside in the *ta* is to live in the *Garden of Hetep*. Many descriptions of this primeval domain do indeed sound very much like a *terrestrial* paradise. The land is filled with wheat or barley, and the inhabitants drink of beer and cool waters. In the *Book of the Dead*, the deceased king announces, "I know the names of the domains, the districts and the streams within the Garden of Hetep . . . there is given to me the abundance . . ."[431] The *Pyramid Texts* depict the deceased king drinking oil and wine and living off "the bread of eternity" and "the beer of everlastingness."[432]

The Egyptians deemed the meadow of peace and plenty at once the *ancestral* land and the *future* home of those yet to pass beyond. Many writers, of course, recognize the *Garden of Hetep* as an early—perhaps the earliest—mythical expression of the lost paradise. Its underlying nature, however, has yet to be penetrated by the conventional schools.

To anyone willing to consider the entire context of Egyptian evidence, it should be clear that the primeval land produced by the creator and imbued with overflowing abundance was celestial. Those who attain the *Garden of Hetep* reach the heaven of the creator. The deceased king in the *Pyramid Texts* goes "to see his father Osiris." He announces: "I have gone to the great island in the midst of the Sekhtet Hetepet [*Garden of Hetepet*] on which the swallow-gods alight; the swallows are the Imperishable Stars . . . I will eat of what you eat. I will drink of what you drink, and you will give satiety to me at the pole . . . You shall set me to be a magistrate among the Khu, the Imperishable Stars in the north of the sky, who rule over offerings and protect the reaped corn, who cause this to go down to the chiefest of the food-spirits who are in the sky."[433]

Let us analyze this important text, which combines several Egyptian interpretations of the celestial garden. As used above, the term *Hetepet* signifies "abundance" or "food offerings." so that the Garden of Hetepet is the Garden of Abundance or Garden of Food Offerings in heaven. Hetepet possesses a root sense of "gathering together" or "uniting" (much like *temt*, "collecting," "gathering together"), a meaning which is vital to the symbolism as a whole.

Hetepet is, of course, inseparable from *hetep*, "rest," "standing in one place." The *Garden of Hetepet* is the *Garden of Hetep*. One can reasonably speak of the Garden as the dwelling of *rest and abundance* (*i.e.*, "peace and plenty"), gathered together by the creator. The symbolism is, as I shall attempt to show, much deeper than standard interpretations would suggest.

In the midst of the celestial garden is the "great island," whose inhabitants—the swallow-gods—are the *Akhemu-Seku* ("never-corrupting" ones), here translated as "the Imperishable Stars." The Egyptians also called these divinities *Akhemu-Urtu* ("never-resting" ones), conventionally identified as circumpolar stars who, revolving around the polar axis, never sink beneath the horizon. But the foregoing text identifies these gods as more than "stars" (in the modern sense of the word). They are the Khu ("words of power" or "light spirits"), which erupted directly from the creator. *There is a vast body of evidence to show that these secondary light gods were themselves the abundant "food" or "offerings" of the celestial garden and that this is what the above hymn means when it speaks of the "food-spirits."*

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431 Renouf, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 193-94.

432 Budge, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 119.

433 *Pyramid Text* 1215-20.

The flowing beer (or wine) and the field of grain (wheat, barley, corn) are, in fact, indistinguishable from the primeval sea of words (secondary gods) which sprang from the creator and which the great god gathered together to form the enclosure of the primeval island—his own "body." On the "great island in the midst of the Garden of Hetepet" the fiery particles (Khu, *Akhemu-Urtu*) "alighted," collectively forming the enclosure. If, in one myth, the god's shining "words" congealed into the island, in another, the isle was produced from the luminous "grain of heaven." *The "words of power," the "grain," and the "company of the gods" represented interrelated mythical interpretations of the primeval matter ejected by the creator.* In the imagination of the Egyptians the creator collected the grain from the celestial field (sometimes called the *Sekhet-Sasa* or "Field of Fire"), and produced the enclosure as the "granary of the gods"—the house of abundance which every king hoped to attain upon death. The grain served as the "dough" from which the creator fashioned his dwelling; and it is this crucial relationship which explains the interconnected meanings of the Egyptian term paut or *pautti*—signifying at once the "primeval matter" (company of gods) and "dough" or "bread." The creator organized the company of gods (the grain) into the revolving Cosmos, conceived as a celestial land of abundance.

Primeval matter=creative "words"=secondary gods=grain of heaven (dough, bread).

In their ceremonies the Egyptians reenacted the creation on a microcosmic scale by fashioning ritual dough cakes used in offerings to the dead. These cakes of paut symbolized the created "land" or "earth," produced from the overflowing grain of heaven. Thus, while the Egyptian *ta* means "land," *ta* also means "bread" or "cakes." Such interrelated terminology pervades the Egyptian language. A review of this usage reveals two consistent principles:

1. The lesser gods (children, servants, assistants) coincide with the "dough"—the beer and grain which erupted from the creator. (Prior to unification as the "land," or Cosmos, the fiery particles compose the sea of Chaos and thus may be termed "fiends" or "demons" of darkness.)

2. The organized dwelling ("land," "city," "place," "domain") coincides with the "granary" and the molded "cake" or "bread" of heaven.

Here are a few of the many examples:

The "children" of the great god are the *pert*, "things which appear"; but *pert* also means "grain." The texts describe the beer and grain (the children) as *pert er kheru*, "appearing at [or as] the words" of the creator. Thus, while *akhib* means "to speak," *akhabu* signifies "grain," and the inhabitants of the heavenly dwelling are the *Akhabiu.*

Similarly, *seru* means at once "grain" and "princes" or "chiefs"; both uses are inseparable from *ser*, "to command," and *serui*, "flame." Properly understood the "grain" and the "princes" refer to the same fiery material mythically perceived as the creator's flaming "commands."

Though *heq* signifies the "ale" or "beer" spit out by the creator, it also means "to command."

If *aut* is "radiance" or "glory" (compare *khu*), the same word signifies "abundance." But *aut* derives from *au*, "children." The abundant wheat and barley—*i.e.*, the light spirits who glorify the creator—are brought forth as the god's own offspring.

Henu means the "servants" of the great god, who "go round about" (*hennui*); but *henu* also denotes "abundance." The lush growth of the celestial abode is the *hen*, but the same word signifies the "glory" or "majesty" of the ruling divinity. From the notion that the celestial lights "glorify" the creator, it is a very short step to the idea that they "praise" him or "sing prayers" to him. Thus *hen* means also "to praise."

Accordingly, the word *tebhu* means "abundance" but also "prayers." (One should not attempt to distinguish the "prayers" from the praying gods; those who glorify the great god *are* the glory.)

So also does *senem* mean, at once, "abundance" and "to pray," "adore."

While "grain" is *shert*, the related term *sherriu* signifies the "little gods."

Fenkhu means "abundance," but the same word denotes the inhabitants of the celestial land.

Ahau means "food" but also the dwellers in the "land."

Hetepet means “abundance,” while the *hetepetiu* are the secondary gods. *Khefa* is “food,” but the *Kheftiu* are the “fiends” of Chaos (eventually organized into the unified dwelling).

Betu means the “grain” or “barley” of heaven, but also the “demons.”

Just as the secondary gods compose the “limbs” or “members” of the central sun, so does the grain. An Egyptian term for “grain” is *atpet*, manifestly derived from *at*, “limb,” and *pet*, “heaven.” The grain becomes the “limbs of heaven” (or of the Heaven Man).

Thus *nepu* signifies “limb” or “flesh,” while *neper* means “grain.” The primeval abode is *Nepert*, *i.e.*, the land formed from the grain.

Gathered together by the creator, the grain becomes the enclosure of the primeval land—the “granary” or the “bread” of the gods (symbolized by the dough cakes employed in the rites of the dead). Thus, while *shen* ( ) denotes the “bond” or “cord” in which the great god dwells, *shena* means at once “granary” and “body” (the god’s body encompasses the grain). *Shenti* also means “granary,” but the same word signifies “garment.” (The garment—belt, girdle, collar—is the organized band of grain.) Symbolizing this celestial enclosure are the *shens*, or sacrificial cakes.

Peq is a name of the celestial land; and the great god’s garment (=land) is *peqt.* But *peqt* also means the “cake” of the gods.

Similarly, *sesher* is the god’s garment, while *seshert* denotes the cake or bread of heaven.

Qefenu is a name of the god’s dwelling, while *qefen* signifies the sacred “cake.”

Nes means both “grain” and “fire.” (The field of grain is the field of fire.) In the rites the grain is fashioned into the *nest* or sacrificial cake. But *nest* also denotes the “throne” of the creator. (Creator’s throne=primeval land.)

The *benet* are light-spirits who accompany the creator. Helping to explain the term is the related word *bennut*, signifying the “matter” or “fluid” which erupted from the solitary god. This primeval matter forms the sacred cake, for “cake” or “bread” is *bennu. Bener*, a name of the created land, derives from the same root.

The “food-spirits” gathered together to form the primeval enclosure are the “builders” of the god’s home. Thus, the “beer” which flows from the creator is *aqet*, but *aqet* also denotes a “builder” or “mason”—*i.e.*, one of the *aqetu* who fashion the celestial dwelling.

The language repeats the same connections again and again:

1. Secondary light gods=celestial abundance (grain, beer, etc.)

2. Unified dwelling of god=celestial abundance (grain, land, body, garment, beer, etc.) gathered into organized form, *i.e.*, as “cake” or “bread.”

It is clear that, in Egyptian ritual, the sacred cakes meant much more than mere “bread.” The cakes were symbols of the great god and his creation—the Garden of Abundance. The celestial prototype of the cake was the island of beginnings, which the creator organized from a previously chaotic sea of “beer and grain.” That the Egyptians conceived the unified “land” or celestial “bread” as the *body* of the creator is crucial to the symbolism; in eating the cake, or in drinking the sanctified beer, the initiates symbolically enjoyed the abundance of the primeval age, or, what is the same thing, they consumed the body of the creator. (I shall not distract from the present discussion by elaborating parallels in later religious symbolism.)

The interrelated terminology identifies the primeval *ta*, “land,” with the *enclosure of the central sun* . The Egyptians knew that the primeval garden lay within the circle of the Aten. (“Thou makest thy creations in thy

great Aten," reads the *Litany of Re*.)[434] Thus the Egyptians denoted the garden of Re by combining the Aten glyph with the glyph for "garden": .

The significance of such imagery seems to have escaped mythologists: *the lost "homeland" of global lore was the original dwelling of the sun-god.* Of the Egyptian *han* or "homeland," Reymond writes: "The Sun-God was believed to operate from his birthplace . . . In its essential nature the primeval sacred domain was the very place from which the Radiance issued first."[435] This "sacred domain" was the island of *ta*, the celestial earth.

Egyptian sources term the created domain *Neter-ta*—the "Holy Land" or "God's Earth." Here occurred the primordial dawn. That is, it was from Neter-ta that the stationary sun shone forth. A hymn to Amen-Re, for example, invokes the sun-god as the "Beautiful Face, who comest [shines] from Neter-ta."[436] No wonder that Egyptologists confuse this Holy Land with the terrestrial east—the place of the *solar* sunrise!

The exact counterpart of the Egyptian Neter-ta is the Sumerian *Dilmun*, the "clear and radiant" dwelling of the gods, ruled by the Universal Monarch Enki. Dilmun, according to Sumerian hymns, is "the place where the sun rises."[437] And many thousands of miles from Mesopotamia the natives of Hawaii recall an ancestral land, *Tahiti Na*, "our peaceful motherland: the tranquil land of Dawn."[438] So also did the Hindus, Persians, Chinese, and many American Indian tribes conceive the lost paradise as the place of the "sunrise."[439]

The World Wheel

That Saturn, the primeval sun, first shed its light from the circle of the created "earth" will explain why the celestial land often appears as a great *wheel* revolving around the stationary sun. It may be called alternately the "world wheel," "world mill," or "chariot." And this turning wheel of the Holy Land is consistently represented by the signs and .

Hindu descriptions of the cosmic wheel affirm that the ancient sun stands at the centre, as the *Chakravartin* or "wheel-turner." From the stationary pivot of the wheel, the Universal Monarch "directs the movement without participating in it himself," states Guenon.[440]

On the Buddhist iconography of the world wheel, Coomaraswamy writes: "He whose seat is on the lotiform nave or navel of the wheel, and himself unmoving sets and keeps it spinning, is the ruler of the world, of all that is natured and extended in the middle region, between the essential nave and the natural felly."[441] The organized "world" lies within the ever-turning rim . The Buddhists regard this sacred domain as both an ancestral paradise and "the situation of the Goal,"[442] the heaven reached by the deceased.

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434 Budge, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 340.

435 Reymond, *The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple*, 84.

436 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 7. But one of the Egyptian phrases for the sacred land is *Neter-ta-Mehti*, rendered by Brugsch as "das nordliche Gottesland"—"the northern land of the gods." This, states Massey, was "the polar paradise in heaven, not an elevated part of our earth." See Massey, *Ancient Egypt*, 378.

437 Gaster, *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament*, 24.

438 Melville, *Children of the Rainbow*, 10.

439 See for example the review by Gaster, *op. cit.*, 24*ff.*

440 *Op. cit.*, 18.

441 Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 27.

442 *Ibid.*, 42.

Buddhist myths say that a plot of "land" congealed out of the cosmic waters to form a band around the great father, becoming the "golden wheel": "The surface of these waters, just as in the Brahmanical cosmology and in Genesis, is stirred by the dawn wind of creation. The foam of the waters solidifies to form the golden circle (*Kancana-mandala*) or 'Land of Gold' (*Kancana-bhumi*), the same as Hsuan-tsang's 'golden wheel' and representing 'the foundations of the earth' . . . The surface of the Land of Gold is the Round of the World."443

That the world wheel stood at the stationary pole is confirmed by the Buddhist account of the primeval "wheel king"—owner of a "wheel whose steadfastness was the measure of his fitness to rule." He was "a universal king," "a righteous king ruling in righteousness, lord of the four quarters of the earth." (The four quarters were the four divisions of the wheel .) The myth states not only that the revolving wheel remained in a stationary position, but that a fall from its fixed place would mean the death of the ruler. "If the Celestial Wheel of a Wheel-turning king shall sink down, shall slip down from its place, that king has not much time to live . . ."444 That is, of course, exactly what happened: the wheel fell, the Universal Monarch died, and the world was thrown into confusion.

One is reminded of the Zoroastrian world wheel called the Spihr. This ever-turning wheel was the "body" of Zurvan, or Time, the planet Saturn. Throughout the primordial epoch, the wheel of the Spihr remained in one spot; and its fall coincided with the collapse of the prosperous age.445

In many myths Saturn's earth-wheel acquires the poetic form of an enormous mill churning out abundance. An old Icelandic tradition, for example, knew the mill as the fabulous possession of Amlodhior Frodhi under whose rule mankind enjoyed peace and prosperity. Recruited by Frodhi to work the mill were two giant maidens, who day and night turned the massive wheel, grinding out gold and happiness. But like all fabled wheels, Frodhi's mill eventually broke down, causing the death of the great monarch.

As shown by de Santillana and von Dechend, Frodhi was the planet Saturn.446 The authors (whose work is titled *Hamlet's Mill*) review widespread traditions of the cosmic mill—from Iceland to Finland to India to Greece—finding many unexpected connections with the same remote planet. (Not once, however, do the two writers wonder whether the tradition of the Saturnian wheel may have originated in the actual observation of a band around the planet.)

As the possession of the Universal Monarch, the mill lies in the farthest north and is regularly identified with the "pole" or "axis" of the world. The Finnish *Kalevala* locates the mill (here called the *Sampo*) on a great rock in "North Farm," the polar garden of plenty. The hero Ilmarinen:

> *. . . forged the Sampo skillfully: on one side a grain mill, on the second side a salt mill, in the third a money* [*i.e.*, gold] *mill.*
>
> *Then the Sampo ground away, the lid of many colours went round and round.*447

This cosmic mill, too, broke down, bringing wholesale disorder. And if the Finnish *Sampo* is a late and fanciful version of the mill, the linguists now recognize the *Sampo's* connection with the older *skambha* of Hindu ritual.448 In the *Atharva Veda* the *Skambha* (meaning "pole") appears as the "golden embryo" and the "frame

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443 *Ibid.*, 52.

444 Perry, *Lord of the Four Quarters*, 131.

445 Zaehner, *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, 111-13, 136, 222.

446 De Santillana and von Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill*, 86*ff.* As soon as one compares the imagery of Saturn's revolving wheel with corresponding images of the Saturnian isle, egg, cord, and girdle, one is forced to think beyond coincidence. The varied symbolism hearkens to a singular form. When Snorri Sturluson speaks of Amlodhi's churning wheel as the "Island Mill," he preserves (probably unwittingly) an important connection: in the original myth the turning island and the mill wheel were the same thing.

447 Magoun, *The Kalevala*, 55-61.

448 De Santillana and von Dechend, *op. cit.*, 111.

of creation," a mill-like edifice "which poured forth the gold within the world." The Vedic hymn equates the mill (*Skambha*) with the whole creation. The body of the *Skambha* houses the life elements and the gods; it is the "ancient one" or "great monster," whose veins are the four quarters of the world (*i.e.*,). That the cosmic mill is at once the Universal Monarch's body and the created paradise will immediately explain why, in the general tradition, the collapse of the great wheel coincides with the death of the god-king and the sinking of the lost land into the waters of the Abyss.

Nothing so confuses the underlying theme as the habit, begun long ago, of conceiving the primordial wheel, or island of "earth," in terrestrial terms. Could the landscape familiar to the ancients have produced the many interrelated images of the turning wheel?

The One-Wheeled Chariot

The great god sits enthroned within the celestial earth as in a one-wheeled chariot. Thus, in Scandinavian rock carvings the symbol —the universal sign of the world wheel—may either appear alone or as the wheel of a celestial wagon. All ancient sun-gods seem to own such a wheel or chariot. The one-wheeled chariot of the Hindu Surya clearly answers to the same cosmic form as "the high-wheeled chariot" of the Iranian Mithra.[449] An early form was the famous sun wheel of the Babylonian Shamash.

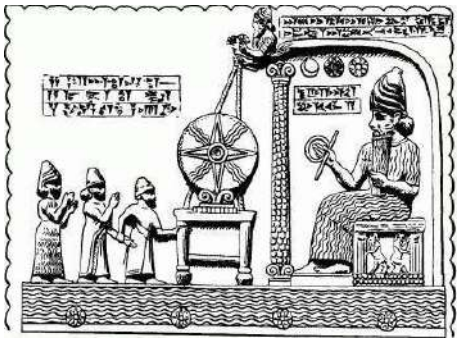

Figure 15. The wheel of Shamash, held in place by a cord.

Figure 16. Triptolemus riding on a single wheel.

449 Keith, *Indian Mythology*, 138.

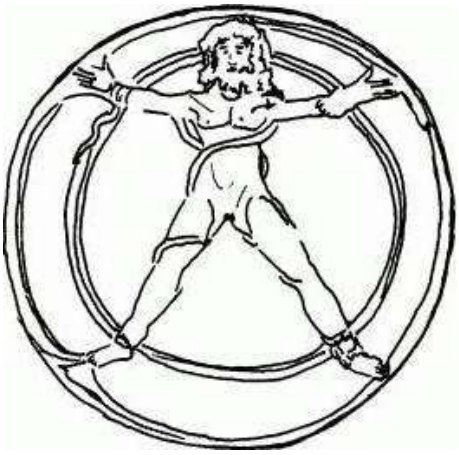

Figure 17. The wheel of Ixion.

Figure 18. Hebrew Yahweh on a single wheel.

Greek art depicts the great father Dionysus seated upon a one-wheeled chariot, much like that of the old god Triptolemos. In the *Astronomica* of Hyginus one finds Triptolemos remembered as "the first of all to use a single wheel."[450] Argive tradition held that the father of Triptolemos was Trochilos, "he of the wheel," whom some identified as the inventor of the first chariot. The Greeks of Chios knew the primeval god Gyrapsios, "he of the round wheel."[451] Obviously, none of these wheels or wheel gods can be separated from the famous wheel of Ixion, set loose in a celestial conflagration. The Hebrew Yahweh similarly sits upon a single wheel.

While modern commentators offer competing interpretations of the cosmic wheel—the chariot of the gods—few stop to notice the link with Saturn. Cook, for example, after a prolonged study of ancient wheel symbolism, acknowledges Kronos (Saturn) as the old wheel or "disk" bearer, but is not inclined to draw any conclusions from this.[452] The "inventor" of the wheel, or "chariot," was the now-distant planet. This is what the Chinese tell us when they report that the god-king Huang-ti, who is identified with the planet Saturn, was the first to use the wheeled chariot. In more than one of the illustrations presented here the cosmic wheel serves as the *throne* of the ruling god. L'Orange calls this "the throne chariot," noting many examples in the ancient Near East.[453] One of the divinities to sit upon such a chariot (or wheel-throne) is the Hebrew Yahweh, whose

450 Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, Vol. I, 215, 225.

451 *Ibid.*, 290.

452 *Ibid.*, 298.

453 L'Orange, *Studies in the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship*, 48*ff.*

seat is "the wheel of the throne of his glory."[454] (The god's revolving throne is the circle of "glory"—that is, his own "halo.")

If later art showed the god *on* the wheeled seat, the original motif has the god in it, for the throne *revolves around the god.* Here, for example, is a verse from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, revealing a little-noticed aspect of the cosmic throne: "O my Seat, O my Throne, come ye to me, and go ye round about me, O ye gods. I am a *sah* [luminous body], therefore let me rise up [shine] among those who follow [go around] the great god."[455] When the deceased king attains the celestial throne he stands within the revolving circle of the gods, the "followers" of the central sun. The Edfu texts call this the "throne-of-gods," for *the divine assembly itself forms the wheel of the throne.*[456]

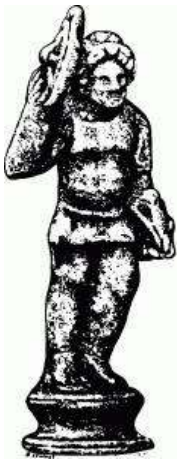

Figure 19. The Celtic god of the wheel.

Figure 20. Anglo-Saxon Seater, with wheel.

Denoted by the throne or wheel-throne is the plot of *ta*, "land," which first emerged from the cosmic sea. The creator brought forth the revolving circle of earth as his "primeval seat." Reymond writes: "The Earth was caused to emerge from Nun by virtue of the radiance of the Sun-God who was believed to dry up the water

454 Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition*, 26.

455 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 189.

456 Reymond, *op. cit.*, 5, note 23. The Throne, as observed by Énel, is not merely the seat of the god, but an enclosure. The primeval sun "dwells" in his throne. *Les Origines de la Genèse, et l'Enseignement des Temples de l'Ancienne Egypte*, 221. The most common Egyptian word for "throne" is *ast*, often written with the determinative (here) which means "chamber," "abode." *Ast* signifies the god's "place"—not just any place, but the place—the *ast ab* ("place of the heart"), *ast urt* ("great place"), *ast hetep* ("place of rest"), or *ast maat*, ("place of regularity").

around his primeval seat."[457] This plot of created "earth" was the *han* or "homeland," which the texts call *neset*, the "throne."[458]

The implications reach far beyond Egypt and bear directly on the wide-ranging myths of cosmic chariots and primeval mills noted above. What one usually regards as two separate themes—the "chariot of the sun" and the "world wheel"—converge in a single image: the wheel of Saturn, the primeval sun. That the ancients denoted the "sun wheel" and the created "earth" by one and the same sign was no coincidence.

The City Of Heaven

The Saturn myth tells us not only that the planet-god ruled the Holy Land as the first king but that he founded the first city. Saturn's "city" means "Saturn's Earth."

The great god lives

fixed in the middle of the sky . . .

dweller in the city.[459]

This is the pronouncement of the Egyptian *Coffin Texts*. The cosmic city is the Primeval Place: "I have come to this city, the region of the 'First Time' to be . . . a dweller in 'this land.'"[460] Thus the Egyptians invoke a celestial Memphis, "the divine emerging primeval island"; a celestial Thebes, "the island emerging in Nun which first came into being"; a celestial Hermonthes, "the high ground which grew out of Nun," or "the egg which originated in the beginning";[461] a celestial Elephantine, the "city in the midst of the waters," or the "throne of Re";[462] and a celestial Abydos, the *ta-ur* or "Great (Primeval) Land."[463]

The integrated symbolism—though at times complex—never departs from the underlying idea of an enclosure around the central sun. The imagery concerns "the original state of the world," rather than a terrestrial city, states Clark.[464] Depicted is the city of the "dawn" or of the "sun's coming forth." The tradition is universal. Mention Erech and historians naturally think of the ancient city in southern Mesopotamia. But the Erech invoked in the ritual is no terrestrial habitation. It is:

Erech, the handiwork of the gods,

The great wall touching the sky,

The lofty dwelling place established by Anu.[465]

The creator An (Anu)—who is the planet Saturn—dwelt in the *uru-ul-la*, "the city of former times"—not a city on earth but the embryo of the Cosmos, according to Van Dijk.[466] Ruling from the "midst of heaven," An

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457 *Op. cit.*, 83.

458 *Ibid.*, 84.

459 Clark, *op. cit.*, 59.

460 *Ibid.*, 177.

461 Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 380, note 21.

462 Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*.

463 Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, 273. The name of the celestial city of Pe means simply "seat" or "throne."

464 *Op. cit.*, 53.

465 Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 47.

466 *Op. cit.*, 13, 20.

shines as "the hero of the sacred city on high."[467] This is the "city founded by An . . . Place where the great gods dine, filled with radiance and awe . . ."[468] The hymns call it "the great city," and "the *place where the sun rises*."[469]

All Mesopotamian traditions describe the celestial city as the original garden of abundance—"the dais of plenty . . . the pure place . . . Its heart like a distant shrine . . . Its feasts flow with fat and milk, are rich with abundance."[470]

Thus did the Sumerians recall the lost land of Dilmun as "the primeval city":

Dilmun, the city thou hast founded . . .

Lo, thy city drinks water in abundance.

Lo, Dilmun drinks water in abundance.[471]

Egyptian and Mesopotamian descriptions of the cosmic city make clear that this habitation was the same enclosure as the lost paradise, and the identity persists in Hebrew and Muslim thought, which continually associates Adam's paradise with a *cosmic Jerusalem.* The light of the Jerusalem above was provided by God himself. "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto glass."[472] One of the Psalms glorifies the celestial Jerusalem as "Sublime in elevation in the uttermost north . . . the City of the King."[473] The heavenly city lay at the cosmic centre; it was the first thing created by God; and it was surrounded by the primeval sea. The image, observes Faber, is "plainly borrowed from the garden of Eden."

The Hebrews also preserved the tradition of a primordial city of Tyre, similarly identified with Eden.[474] In Ezekiel we read:

"O Tyre, you have said,

'I am perfect in beauty.'

Your borders are in the heart of the seas . . .

You were in Eden, the garden of God;

every precious stone was your covering."[475]

This equation of the cosmic city and the original paradise finds numerous parallels in other traditions. The Persian *vara* fashioned by Ahura Mazda is at once the first city and the lost paradise.[476] The "all-containing

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467 Langdon, *Sumerian Liturgies and Psalms*, 297.

468 Sjöberg and Bergmann, *op. cit.*, 2.

469 *Ibid.*, 89. [Emphasis added.]

470 Kramer, *From the Tablets of Sumer*, 87.

471 Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 195. The same can be said of the celestial city of Eridu, which like Dilmun served as the primeval home of Enki. Eridu, "teeming with fertility," floated on the cosmic sea Apsu, and more than one writer has asserted, with Pinches, that Enki's city was "as a garden of Eden." Sayce, *Gifford Lectures*, 386; Albright, "*The Mouth of the Rivers*." Pinches' comment is quoted in Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia*, lvi.

472 Revelation 21:11.

473 Psalm 48:2.

474 *The Origins of Pagan Idolatry*, 350-51.

475 Ezekiel 27: 3-4; 28: 13 (RSV).

476 Darmesteter, *The Zend Avesta*, I, 16-19.

city of Brahma" at the pole merges into the paradisal plain of Ila;477 the Imperial City of the Chinese Shang-ti coincides with the mythical paradise of Kwen-lun;478 while the Mexican lost city of Aztlan ("surrounded by waters") and the Mayan lost city of Tula (the "enclosure" in the sea) both appear as gardens of abundance.479

A coherent pattern unifies what are often assumed to be unrelated myths and symbols: the created "earth," the lost paradise, the wheel of the sun, the revolving throne, and the cosmic city. While the mythical formulations vary, all point to the same band housing the central sun.

Surely it is of significance that, while these images are often dissociated in later myths, they constantly overlap in the earliest versions. The Aztecs may have forgotten that the lost city was the throne of the creator; and perhaps many Greek cults no longer remembered that the Island of the Blessed was the turning wheel of the sun, but such connections are central to the world's oldest cosmologies.

The interrelationships are clearly evident in the image of the mother goddess, who unites in a single personality the varied aspects of the celestial earth: paradise, wheel, throne, and city.

The Egyptian great mother—whether called Isis, Nut, Hathor, Mut, or Neith—is *nebt en neter ta*, "the Lady of the Holy Land" or "the Lady of God's Earth." The "island of earth," according to the *Pyramid Texts*, lies "between the thighs of Nut."480 If one permits the Egyptian concept to illuminate later symbolism of the "mother earth" one sees that the supposed distinction between earth goddesses and sky goddesses lacks foundation. "God's Earth" means Saturn's Earth, and this *mother* land, circumscribed by the womb of the goddess, is the enclosure of the central sun .

Nor can one fail to notice that the hieroglyph for the goddess Nut —"the holy abode"—is the form of a wheel and an obvious prototype of the "world wheels" so common to Eastern symbolism. Isis, in the classical age, was also symbolized by a wheel.481

Mesopotamian cults represented the goddess Ishtar, "the womb," by a wheel. The Hindu goddess Rta is the "wheel of law" controlling the cosmic cycle, while the goddess Ila personifies the *chakra* or world wheel. The name of the Celtic goddess Arianrhod means "silver wheel." One is reminded also of the iynx wheel of Aphrodite and the wheels of Tyche, Nemesis, and Fortuna, all of which appear to reflect a common idea. As the stable, ever-turning circle of the Cosmos, the goddess eventually became the abstract "wheel of Mother Nature."482

And when one realizes that the wheel served as the great father's revolving throne it can come as no surprise to discover that, in the archaic terminology, "throne" and "goddess" are synonymous. "The seated great mother," states Neumann, "is the original form of the 'enthroned goddess,' and also of the throne itself. As mother and earth woman the Great Mother is the 'throne' pure and simple . . . The king comes to power by 'mounting the throne' and so takes his place on the lap of the Great Goddess, the earth—he becomes her son."483

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477 Faber, *op. cit.*, 326, 341.

478 See the discussion of the Chinese polar mount Kwen-lun.

479 Alexander, *Latin American Mythology*, 114, 178.

480 *Pyramid Text* 188.

481 Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 271. Cook's entire discussion (Vol. I, 253-83) assumes the wheel to be synonymous with the solar orb.

482 Nuemann, *The Great Mother*, 238.

483 *Ibid.*, 98.

Figure 21. The goddess Nemesis, with wheel of fate.

In the Hindu kingship rites reviewed by Hocart, "the king is made to sit on a throne which represents the womb."[484] But the identity of the throne and womb is as old as human language: the Egyptian hieroglyph for

Isis, the womb of heaven, is a simple throne .

But the same mother goddess encloses the cosmic city. The determinative of "city" in the Egyptian hieroglyphs is simply the sign of the "holy abode" , the goddess Nut. The *Pyramid Texts* invoke the goddess, "in this your name of 'settlements,' . . . in this your name of 'City.'"[485] while the *Book of the Dead* extols the great mother as "Lady of terrors, lofty of walls."[486]

The Egyptian city-goddess finds a close parallel in the Babylonian goddess Ura-azaga, whose name means "brilliant town."[487] Tyro, the mother goddess of the Tyrians, gave the Greeks their word *tyrsis*, "walled city."[488] To enter the celestial city is to find shelter in the primeval womb. Thus the refuge of Delphi is "the womb" and Jerusalem "the city of the heavenly womb."[489]

In the New Testament (Book of Revelation) one finds a fascinating equation of primeval goddess and primeval city. In his vision, John beholds "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication . . . and upon her forehead was a name written, 'MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." Who was this "mother of harlots"? The angel explains: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."[490] The language points to the ancient rites of kingship, in which every local ruler took as his *consort* the city (womb) on the cosmic waters.

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484 Hocart, *Kingship*, 80. The significance is too often missed: after informing us that the throne was the glyph of Isis, Budge continues, "but we have no means of connecting it with the attributes of the goddess in such a way as to give a rational explanation of her name, and all derivations hitherto proposed must be regarded as mere guesses." Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 202. But is it a "mere guess" to connect the Isis-throne with the enclosure of the primeval womb? (The Egyptian *ast*, "throne," means "enclosure," as we have seen.)

485 *Pyramid Texts* 178, 1605.

486 Accordingly, the sun in the cosmic womb appears as the "boy in the city." Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 274.

487 Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 59.

488 Graves, *The Greek Myths*, 223.

489 Allegro, *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*, 133.

490 Revelation 17: 1-2, 5, 18.

In ranging over the myths and symbols of the created earth, paradise, wheel, throne, and city, one thus remains in the shadow of a single mother goddess, who contains within her womb the first organized domain in heaven, the island of Saturn's Cosmos .

The Enclosure As Prototype

In dealing with the myths and symbols of the Holy Land one must reckon with the distinction—not always spelled out in ancient literature—between the celestial prototype and the terrestrial copy. Every sacred kingdom or city derives its character from the primeval dwelling, so that whatever was said of the enclosure above was also said of the imitative form constructed by men.

"From the concordant testimony of all the traditions," writes Guenon, "a conclusion emerges very clearly: the affirmation that there exists a 'Holy Land' par excellence, prototype of all other 'Holy Lands,' the spiritual centre to which all other centres are subordinated."491

Through identification, the sacred history of the race or nation merges with the history of the gods, for each organized community viewed itself as a duplication of the celestial "race." Each line of historical kings leads back to a first king who is not a man, but Saturn, the supreme power of heaven; in the same way, the race as a whole traces its ancestry to a generation of gods or semi-divine beings who inhabited the "earth" raised in the creation. By this universal tendency, Saturn's paradise becomes the *ancestral* land, the place where history began. Does not every nation claim that its ancestors descended from a race of gods, who occupied a happy garden at the centre and summit?

It was with the utmost seriousness that the ancients laid out their first political settlements, taking the cosmic habitation as the *prescribed plan.* The purpose was to establish Saturn's kingdom on earth, repeating the creator's defeat of Chaos and founding a central authority whose power extended to a protective "border" separating the kingdom of light from the powers of darkness and disorganization (the "barbarians").

Accordingly, the first sacred cities were organized as circular enclosures around the ruling lord. Ritual requirements superseded practical considerations, and even when geography and growth prevented or distorted the purely circular form, the sacred city was still *conceived* as a revolving enclosure. Symbolically, every Egyptian city lay within the shield or protective border of Nut (the "Great Protectoress"). The Babylonian map shows the land as a circle around a centre. "Here," concludes Eliade, "the earthly abode is the counterpart (*mehret*) of the heavenly abode."492

Hebrew thought repeatedly insists that the terrestrial Jerusalem was but a likeness of the city first constructed by God. "A celestial Jerusalem was created by God before the city was built by the hand of man . . . The heavenly Jerusalem kindled the inspiration of all the Hebrew prophets," observes Eliade.493 The distinction between the local and the primordial city receives emphatic statement in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch, when God asks, "Dost thou think that this is that city of which I said: 'On the palms of my hands have I graven thee'? This building now built in your midst is not that which is revealed with me, that which was prepared beforehand here from the time when I took counsel to make Paradise . . ."494 (Again, note the equation of the city—Jerusalem and paradise.)

Equally clear is the primacy of the archetypal city in Hinduism, according to Eliade. "All the Indian royal cities, even the modern ones, are built after the mythical model of the celestial city, where, in the age of gold

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491 *Op. cit.*, 95.

492 *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 19-20.

493 *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, 8-9.

494 II Baruch IV: 2-4.

(*in illo tempore*), the Universal Sovereign dwelt . . . Thus, for example, the palace fortress of Sigiriya, in Ceylon, is built after the model of the celestial city Alakamanda and is 'hard of ascent for human beings'"[495]

Symbolically, each Hindu settlement stood within the *mandala* or "circle," delineating a consecrated space magically protected from the invading forces of disintegration.[496] The sanctified area, observes Tucci, "by the line of defense which circumscribes it, represents protection from the mysterious forces that menace the sacred purity of the spot . . ." This protective circle is "above all, a map of the cosmos."[497]

As documented by L'Orange, the circle around a centre was the ideal form of sacred cities in the Near East, as typified by the residential cities of Darabjird and Firuzabad, whose circular form served as a precedent for the "Round City" of Baghdad. The ideal pattern derived from the ancient conception of the Cosmos, states L'Orange.[498]

The same symbolism attaches to the Roman *mundus*a trench dug around the spot on which a new city was to be built. The enclosure served as a protective bond, ordaining the city as a renewal of the primeval homeland.[499] In the old documents the Roman cities were the *urbes*, from *orbis*, "round."[500]

The consistent pattern of the sacred territory shows the influence of a universal prototype. Yet few researchers take the prototype seriously. When the creation myths speak of a primordial Heliopolis, Erech, or Jerusalem, the analysts think only of the terrestrial city. One can, with far greater assurance, insist that the local habitation *never* produces, on its own, a cosmic myth of any kind.

In Egypt, it is the primeval sun who rules the original Heliopolis, Memphis, Thebes, Herakleopolis, just as it is the primeval sun who governs as the first king of Egypt as a whole. The city and kingdom repeat, on different scales, *the same history* and this fact alone is sufficient to show that the "history" is not local but universal. If the myths say that Egypt was "gathered together" from the primeval matter, forming an island around the sun, they say the same of the sacred city, whatever its name.[501]

That the ancients often forgot the distinction between their own city or kingdom and the celestial prototype was a natural result of the inseparable bond between the two. The local habitation inherited the mythical character of the celestial, so that the divergent actual histories of ancient nations lead back to one universal history.

It is in this sense that one must understand the legends of the first kings and primeval generations. Many Egyptian texts, for example, refer to a remote time in which the land was ruled by the "followers of Horus." An inscription of a King Ranofer (just prior to the Middle Kingdom) recalls "the time of your (fore)fathers, the kings, Followers of Horus." A text of Thutmose I speaks of great fame the like of which was not "seen in the annals of the ancestors since the Followers of Horus." The *Turin Papyrus* places this primeval generation prior to the first historical king, Menes.[502]

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495 *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 9.

496 Tucci, *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala*, 23.

497 Ibid., 23.

498 *Op. cit.*, 9*ff*.

499 Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 15-16.

500 Jung and Kerenyi, *Essays on a Science of Mythology*, 12.

501 Many Egyptologists, however, make no distinction between the cosmic and the local cities. Thus Budge, speaking of the actual Egyptian city of Henen-su (Herakleopolis), tells us that this habitation "is often referred to in the *Book of the Dead*, and a number of important mythological events are said to have taken place there. Thus it was here that Re rose for the first time when the heavens and the earth were created, and it was this rising which formed the first great act of creation . . . Osiris was here crowned lord of the universe . . . In this place the souls of the beatified found a place of rest in the realm of Osiris . . . " Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 58-59. That these were cosmic, not geographical places and events, should be obvious.

502 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 90.

Did these mythical "ancestors" actually rule terrestrial Egypt? In truth the "Followers of Horus" means, not a generation of mortals, but the assembly of the gods. The "ancestors" were the light-spirits of the celestial city, encircling and protecting the central sun. Just as the myths translate the Universal Monarch into the first king of Egypt, so also do they express the god-king's companions as a primeval race from which all Egyptian nobility might claim descent. Every Holy Land on our earth was assimilated to the same celestial kingdom and every race to the same generation of gods.

The World Navel

Through identification with Saturn's dwelling, each terrestrial kingdom or city of antiquity distinguished itself as the Middle Place, the centre from which history took its start. Symbolically each local Holy Land became the *omphalos* or "navel of the world."

Thus, the mythic navel constitutes a global motif of archaic symbolism. As documented in the separate studies of Roscher and Muller,503 the ancient cities of Babylon and Nineveh (as well as Baghdad), Jerusalem, Hebron Bethel, Shechem, and the entire land of Palestine; numerous Greek cities (including Athens); the Muslim city of Mecca; and countless other cities of Asia and Europe were styled "the navel" or "the centre of the earth."

Just as the Egyptians conceived their land as the "middle-earth" (*Aguipte*), the Chinese proclaimed their empire to be the "Kingdom of the Middle."504 Early Japanese sources call Japan the centre of the earth—or the "middle kingdom of the reed plain," while the Mongolians regard their home as "the Middle Place."505 Peoples of northern Siberia know the Yenisei as "the centre of the world,"506 Ireland was once the kingdom of the *Mide* or "Middle."507

In faraway Easter Island the natives speak of their land as the "navel."508 And in the Americas, the Zuni call (or once called) their town "the Middle Place"; the Inca city of Cuzco signified "the navel of the earth";509 so also did the Chickasaw of Mississippi regard their territory as "the centre of the earth."510

The reader may respond: isn't it perfectly natural that a people, seeing other lands and nations distributed around them, would come to regard their own as the "centre"? This is, of course, a common explanation of the universal habit. On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that the concept of the world navel reflects something more than narrow vision or tribal arrogance.

The acknowledged religious centre of the Greeks was Delphi, on the steep slopes of Mount Parnassus. Here was located the omphalos ("navel"), revered as the Seat of Apollo and "the centre of the earth." But among the Greeks, Delphi was not alone in claiming distinction as the omphalos. Similar claims were made for world navels in the Peloponnesus, at Elis, at Thessaly, and at Crete. Both the Aetolians and Epirotes were called *omphalians* or "people of the navel."511

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503 Roscher, *Omphalos; Neue Omphalosstudien; Der Omphalosgedanke bei Verschiedenen Völkern*; Muller, *Die Heilige Stadt*.

504 Brown, *Eradinus: River and Constellation*; de Saussure, "Origins Chinoise de la Cosmologie Iranienne."

505 W.T. Warren, *Paradise Found*, 141, note 3; O'Neill, *The Night of the Gods*, 359.

506 Uno Holmberg, *Siberian Mythology*, 308.

507 Guenon, *op. cit.*, 79.

508 Makemson, *The Morning Star Rises*, 10; Heyerdahl, *Kon-Tiki*, 141.

509 Nuttall, *Fundamental Principles of Old and New World Civilization*, 133.

510 W.T. Warren, *op. cit.*, 248, note 1.

511 Faber, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, 83.

Many competing seats of Apollo appear as the omphalos, according to Roscher.512 Rather than suggest narrow-mindedness, such repeated claims confirm a consistent memory: from high antiquity the idea must have been passed down that Apollo's throne occupied the "centre." All local shrines certainly shared this tradition. But one must not mistake the imitation for the original. Just as one might say of Apollo's statue, "This is the god Apollo," without intending a literal identification, so could the cult worshippers say of the local shrine, "This is the throne of Apollo at the earth navel." That the statement comes from more than one locality only reinforces the general tradition. The truth was observed by W. T. Warren long ago when he declared Delphi to be "a memorial shrine, an attempted copy of the great original."513

Clearly, the "great original"—the god's primeval home—was not of our earth. Apollo, the polar sun, was not the only god to occupy this centre. In Mexico, a Nahuatl hymn extols the god Ometeotl as:

Mother of the Gods, Father of the Gods,

the old God

distended in the navel of the earth,

engaged in the enclosure of turquoise

*He who dwells in waters the colour of the bluebird.*514

A Babylonian hymn located the god Ea at the "centre of the earth":

The path of Ea was in Eridu, teeming with fertility.

His seat (there) is the centre of the earth;

his couch is the bed of the primeval

*mother.*515

Similarly, the Egyptian Osiris "sits in judgement on the Primeval Mound, which is in the middle of the world," states Clark.516 In the ancient account of Sanchuniathon, the great god El (Kronos/Saturn) acquires supremacy "in a certain place in the *center of the earth.*"517

The earth navel, in the original tradition, is the inaccessible dwelling at the cosmic summit which is why the Hindus could say of the fire god Agni,518 "He is the head and summit of the sky, the centre [*Nabhi*, navel] of the earth." Hebrew and Muslim thought constantly identifies the throne of Yahweh and Allah with the "navel of the earth," but this navel is *above*, for the Muslim text states of the *Ka'ba*, or earth navel: "Know that the centre of the earth, according to a tradition on the authority of the Prophet, is the Ka'ba: it has the significance of the navel of the earth, because of its rising *above* the level of the earth."519

Another source relates, "Tradition says: the *polestar* proves the Ka'ba is the highest situated territory; for it lies over against the centre of heaven."520 Both Jerusalem and Mecca, as earth navels, lie at the cosmic summit.

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512 Roscher, *Omphalos*, 20*ff*.

513 *Op. cit.*, 235.

514 Léon-Portilla, *Pre-Columbian Literatures of Mexico*, 63.

515 Sayce, *Gifford Lectures*, 386.

516 *Op. cit.*, 178.

517 Faber, *A Dissertation on the Cabire*, Vol. I, 73. [Emphasis added.]

518 Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts* V, 214*ff*.

519 Wensinck, "*The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth*," 36. [Emphasis added.]

520 *Ibid.*, 15. [Emphasis added.]

"The centre of the earth and the pole of heaven, both are intimately connected with the throne," observes Wensinck.521

Similarly, Gnostic traditions surveyed by Jung consider the polar region both "the seat of the highest gods" and "the navel of the world."522 That the Greek omphalos received the appellation "axis" indicates an obvious connection with the pole.523

In all of these traditions, of course, one has to contend with the confusion between the celestial earth and what we call "earth" today. It can hardly be doubted that ancient races eventually came to use the phrase "world navel" in connection with the terrestrial landscape. The original concept of the navel, however, is not complicated by ambiguous meanings of the "earth." In the original tradition, the created earth is the navel, pure and simple; Saturn's Cosmos appeared as a central enclosure or "navel" of dry ground rising from the primordial waters. So it is not surprising to find that the symbol of the navel was the enclosed sun , the sign of the world wheel. "The concentric circles or the dot-in-circle denoted, in the Mediterranean area, the omphalos, the navel of the earth," states Butterworth.524 (Thus, in organizing their sacred cities in the form of a wheel the ancients expressed the cities' character as "navel.")

The enclosed sun , according to Neumann, served as "the life symbol of the womb-navel-centre."525 It would be difficult to improve upon this definition. To reside within the life-containing navel is to dwell in the *womb of the mother goddess*, for the omphalos, as discerned by Uno Holmberg, is "the representative of the Great Mother" not only in classical symbolism but in Hindu and Altaic ritual also.526

Hence Delphi, the Greek omphalos, signifies "the womb."527 The spouse of Hercules is Omphale, the female personification of the omphalos.528 In the same way, Hindu ritual constantly identifies the mystic yoni or "womb" with the navel: Agni is "born from the yoni or navel of the earth,"529 while Brahma is the "navel-born."530

Such symbolism connects the famous navel with the primeval enclosure. Saturn's band, marking out the stable, revolving island which appeared in the cosmic waters, came to be remembered as the cosmic centre—where mythical history began.

The Ocean

Many ancient traditions describe a circular ocean or river girdling the "earth."

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521 *Ibid.*, 55.

522 Jung, *Aion*, 125.

523 Roscher, *Omphalos*, 43.

524 *The Tree at the Navel of the Earth*, 39.

525 *Op. cit.*, 127.

526 *Der Baum des Lebens*, 95.

527 Faber, *Origins of Pagan Idolatry*, Vol. III, 90.

528 *Ibid.*, 92.

529 Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 19.

530 *Ibid.*, 18.

The gods, according to the Norse creation legend, "made the vast ocean, in the midst of which they fixed the earth, the ocean encircling it as a ring."[531] By the Greek Okeanos, "the whole earth is bound."[532] The Babylonians said of the nether river, "all earth it encloses."[533] Hebrew and Arabic cosmologies, according to Wensinck, hold that "the whole of the earth is round and the ocean surrounds it like a collar."[534]

In spite of the widespread belief, certain classical writers grew skeptical. Of the famous ocean-stream the historian Herodotus announced: "For my part, I cannot but laugh when I see numbers of persons drawing maps of the world without reason to guide them; making, as they do, the Ocean-stream to run all round the earth."[535]

Or again: "The boundaries of Europe are quite unknown, and there is not a man who can say whether any sea girds it round either on the north or on the east."[536] Such was the inevitable conclusion of historians and philosophers, once the "world" or "earth" lost its original cosmic meaning and passed into a figure of geography. Even today conventional treatments of the mythical ocean perpetuate the misunderstanding.

The cynics overlooked a most significant point: originally, the ocean encircled the *creator* as a girdle: Okeanos was no terrestrial river, but the "belt" around the cosmic deity.[537] The "land" which the ocean enclosed was the dwelling of the gods. Hesiod, for example, in his description of the shield of Hercules (an acknowledged figure of the Cosmos) identifies the ocean as the rim of the shield, enclosing a celestial paradise.

The shield was a wonder to see, "for its whole orb was a-shimmer with enamel and white ivory and electrum, and it glowed with shining gold." Within the shield's protective enclosure dwelt the great god and the lesser divinities: "There also was the abode of the gods, pure Olympus, and their assembly, and infinite riches were spread around in the gathering of the deathless gods." The inhabitants of this circular land above celebrated a continual festival, for here grew grapes and corn in abundance. "And around the rim," writes Hesiod, "Ocean was flowing, with a full stream as it seemed, and enclosed all the cunning work of the shield."[538]

As in the case of the world navel, the imagery makes sense only when one understands the created "earth" as the dwelling of the great god himself.

Egyptian sources remove all possible doubt as to the celestial character of the encircling stream. The *Coffin Texts* say of the Father of the Gods: "the river around him is ablaze with light."[539] The same circular river is called a lake of fire. Re appears as *ami-mer-nesert*, "he who is in his fiery lake"; while the throne of Horus is the "Lake of Double Fire."[540]

Actually, the Egyptian ocean or lake is simply the Tuat, the dwelling of Osiris or Re:[541] "This is the lake which is in the Tuat . . . This lake is filled with barley [*i.e.*, grain, abundance]. The water of the lake is fire."[542]

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531 Perry, *Lord of the Four Quarters*, 184.

532 Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*, 316.

533 Sayce, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, 478.

534 Wensinck, "The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites," 25.

535 Herodotus iv, 36.

536 Herodotus iv, 45.

537 In the Orphic description of the primeval Nous or Mind, "the circling ocean was his belt." See our chapter II.

538 Evelyn-White, *Hesiod*, 229*ff*.

539 Clark, *Myth and Symbol*, 86.

540 Budge, *The Papyrus of Ani*, 187.

541 See *Pyramid Texts* 77 and 512.

Containing the fiery waters of the Abyss, the celestial river or lake encircled the "world." *The Pyramid Texts* invoke:

The Great Circle, in your name of "Great Surround,"
an enveloping ring, in the "Ring that encircles the
Outermost Lands",
A Great Circle in the Great Round of the
Surrounding Ocean.[543]

In the Egyptian symbolism this watery circle is the band of the enclosed sun , the band which circumscribed the outermost limit of the cosmic dwelling. The "ocean" in the above text is the *Shen-ur*, or "the great Shen." In the Egyptian language the *shen* bond or cord (,) signifies at once the band of the Aten and "ocean" or "river." One can properly term this circle of water "the river of the cosmic bond" or "the ocean of the cord."

Pointing to the same interrelationships is the Egyptian word *nut.* Nut, the goddess, is the female personification of the Cosmos or *shen* bond; but *nut* also denotes "stream," "river," "sea." The encircling river, as the *border* of the "Holy abode" (*nut*), thus gives rise to the phrase "the ocean, the border of Nut."[544] That *nut* further means "cord" and "city" only confirms the integrated symbolism.

In none of this symbolism is there any suggestion of a *terrestrial* ocean. As detailed by Reymond, the primeval waters form an enclosure around the *resting place of the great god* "perhaps resembling the channel which was made around sacred places later on."[545] Encircled by the celestial river, the province of beginning becomes the "island in the stream,"[546] or the "pool." (See, for example, the "pool of Hermopolis"; the celestial Abydos was the "pool of Maati.")[547]

The mythical "waters" are inseparable from the primeval matter or company of gods which exploded from the creator, subsequently to be gathered into the circle of glory (*khut*). The radiant gods—or "Primeval Ones"—revolved around the border of the cosmic ocean or lake, for the Egyptians, according to Reymond, "imagined that, after the phases of the primary creation were completed, these Primeval Ones lived in the vicinity of the pool . . . Their resting place, however, is portrayed as of the most primitive appearance: *the bare edges of the pool.*"[548] The gods occupy the border and revolve around it, as confirmed by the *Book of the Dead*: "'Hail,' say these gods who dwell in their companies and who go round about the Turquoise Pool."[549]

Nor in Egypt alone does the cosmic ocean form the band of the enclosed sun . Here is a Sumerian description of the Engur or "river" around the motionless lord Enki:

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542 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 152.

543 Clark, *op. cit.*, 117.

544 Maj Sandman Holmberg, *The God Ptah*, 106.

545 *Op. cit.*, 142.

546 Kees, "Kulttopographische und Mythologische Beträge," 151.

547 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 97; Reymond, *op. cit.*, 152.

548 *Op. cit.*, 80. [Emphasis added.]

549 Budge, *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 170.

Thou River, creatress of all things,

When the great gods dug thee, on thy bank they placed mercy.

Within thee Ea, King of the Apsu, built his abode.

They gave thee the Flood, the unequalled.

Fire, rage, splendour, and terror . . .

O great River, far-famed River . . .[550]

These are the waters of the cosmic sea Apsu—"the waters which are forever *collected together* in the deep,"[551] corresponding to the Egyptian dwelling gathered together by the creator. The oldest image of this encircling river or ocean is the ancient Sumerian sign for *Kis* (the all, the complete land, the Cosmos): . The band in this sign, according to Jeremias, represents the encircling ocean, the same river that is depicted encircling the "earth" (Cosmos) in the Babylonian world map.[552] Like the Egyptian ocean the revolving stream forms the border of the celestial land.

As the womb of primeval birth, the Sumerian *Engur*, "River," provides a close parallel to the Egyptian goddess Nut. Indeed, like Nut, the Sumero-Babylonian river goddess was conceived as the unifying cord. The waters of *Engur* (Apsu) compose the *tarkullu*, "rope," or the *markasu*, "band," bond," holding together the created Cosmos.[553] Like the Egyptians, the Sumero-Babylonians recalled the enclosure of the cosmic ocean as that which gave birth to the primeval sun. The god who "illuminates the interior of the Apsu" is Ninurta, the planet Saturn.[554]

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550 Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 105.

551 Sayce, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, 487. [Emphasis added.]

552 Jeremias, *Handbuch der Altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, 31.

553 Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 309.

554 Jensen, *op. cit.*, 248-467.

VI. The Enclosed Sun-Cross

The Four Rivers Of Paradise

"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads."555 So reads the Book of Genesis. The four rivers of Adam's paradise, according to many Hebrew and early Christian accounts, flowed in opposite directions, spreading to the four corners of the world.556

The tradition is apparently universal. The Navaho Indian narration of the "Age of Beginnings" speaks of an ancestral land from which the inhabitants were driven by a great catastrophe. Among the occupants of this remote home, some say, were "First Man" and "First Woman." Most interesting is the means by which the land was watered: "In its centre was a spring from which four streams flowed, one to each of the cardinal points . . ."557

The Chinese paradise of Kwen-lun, adorned with pearls, jade, and precious stones, lay at the centre and zenith of the world.558 In this happy abode stood a central fountain from which flowed "in opposite directions the four great rivers of the world."559

Four rivers appear also in the Hindu *Rig Veda*: "the noblest, the most wonderful work of this magnificent one [Indra], is that of having filled the bed of the four rivers with water as sweet as honey."560 The *Vishnu Purana* identifies the four streams with the paradise of Brahma at the world summit. They, too, flow in four directions.561

Iranian myth recalls four streams issuing from the central fount Ardvi Sura and radiating in the four directions. Similarly, the Kalmucks of Siberia describe a primordial sea of life and fertility, with four rivers flowing "toward the four different points of the compass."562

The tradition is repeated by many other nations. The Mandaeans of Iraq enumerate four great rivers flowing from the north.563 Just as the Babylonians recalled "the land of the four rivers,"564 the Egyptians knew "Four

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555 Genesis 2:10.

556 Gaster, *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament*, 27-28; Wensinck, "The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites," 59-60; see also our section on "The Foundation Stone".

557 Alexander, *North American Mythology*, 159.

558 W.T. Warren, *Paradise Found*, 129; O'Neill, *The Night of the Gods*, 909.

559 Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, 26.

560 *Ibid.*, 19-21.

561 *Ibid.*, 27-29.

562 Uno Holmberg, *Die Religiösen Vorstellungen der Altaischen Völker*, 86-87; *Der Baum des Lebens*, 71*ff.*

563 Albright, "*The Mouth of the Rivers*," 189.

564 Brown, *Eradinus: River and constellation*, 46.

Niles," flowing to the four quarters.565 The home of the Greek goddess Calypso, in the "navel of the sea," possessed a central fountain sending forth "four streams, flowing each in opposite directions."566

In the Scandinavian *Edda*, the world's waters originate in the four streams flowing from the spring Hvergelmir in the land of the gods,567 while Slavic tradition recalls four streams issuing from under the magic stone Alatuir in the island paradise of Bonyan.568 Brinton finds the four mystic rivers among the Sioux, Aztecs, and Maya, just as Fornander discovers them in Polynesian myth.569

The lost land of the four rivers presents a particularly enigmatic theme for conventional mythology because few, if any, of the nations possessing the memory can point to any convincing geographical source of the imagery. When the Babylonians invoke Ishtar as "Lady, Queen of the land of the Four Rivers of Erech,"570 or when an Egyptian text at Dendera celebrates the Four Niles at Elephantine, one might expect the familiar landscape to explain the usage. But wherever the mythical four rivers appear, they possess the character of an "ideal" land, in contrast to actual geography.

The reason for this disparity between the mythical and terrestrial landscapes is that *the four rivers flowed, not on our earth, but through the four quarters of the polar "homeland."* To what aspect of Saturn's kingdom might the mythical rivers refer?

For every dominant mythical theme there are corresponding signs (though this truth is still to be acknowledged by most authorities). The signs of the four rivers are the sun-cross and the enclosed sun-cross , the latter sign illuminating the former by showing that the four streams belong to the primeval enclosure. Issuing from the polar centre (*i.e.*, the central sun), the four rivers flow to the four corners of Saturn's Earth.

The sign of the enclosed sun-cross , observes Cirlot, "expresses the original Oneness (symbolized by the centre)," and "*the four radii . . . are the same as the four rivers which well up from the fons vitae . . .*"571

But if one myth identifies the arms of the sun-cross as four paradisal rivers, there are other interpretations of the cross as well, for this primal image produced a wide-ranging and coherent symbolism, as I shall now attempt to show.

The Crossroads

From Saturn, the central sun, flowed four primary paths of light. In the myths these appear as four rivers, four winds, four streams of arrows, or four children, assistants, or light-spirits bearing the Saturnian seed (*the life elements*) *through the four quarters of the celestial kingdom.*

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565 Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, 173.

566 Albright, "The Goddess of Life and Wisdom" 261.

567 Gaster, *op. cit.*, 27.

568 *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. II, 706.

569 Gaster, *op. cit.*, 27.

570 Brown, *op. cit.*, 46.

571 *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 127. [Emphasis added.] The mystic idea "is confirmed and reinforced when it is portrayed in architectural plans: whether in the cloister, the garden or the patio, the fountain occupies the centre position, at least in the majority of architectural works built during periods within the symbolist tradition, as in Romanesque or Gothic edifices. Furthermore, the four rivers of Paradise are denoted by four paths which radiate out from the region of the cloister towards a clear space, circular or octagonal in shape, which forms the basin of the fountain." *Ibid.*, 113.

The sun-cross *and enclosed sun-cross* *, depicting the four life-bearing streams, thus serve as universal signs of the Holy Land.*

The modern world is accustomed to think of "the four quarters" in terrestrial terms. Today we conceive north, east, west, and south only in relationship to our own position or to a fixed geographical reference point. Chicago is "west" of New York and "east" of Omaha, and to the modern mind the "four corners of the world" only serves as a vague metaphor for "the entire globe."

To the ancients, however, "the Four Corners of the World" possessed explicit meaning; originally, the phrase referred not to geography but to *cosmography*, the "map" of the celestial kingdom, laid out in the polar heaven. One of the few scholars to recognize this quality of the mythical "four corners" was O'Neill: "It results from any full study of the myths, symbolism, and nomenclature of the Four Quarters that these directions were viewed in the strict orthodoxy of heavens-mythology, not as the NSEW of every spot whatever, but four heavens-divisions spread out around the pole."572

The sun-cross , as the symbol of the four quarters, belongs to the *central* sun. In sacred cosmography the central position of the sun-god becomes the "fifth" direction. To understand such language, it is convenient to think of the mythical "directions" (or arms of the cross) as *motions* or *flows of energy*. From the great god the elements of life flow in four directions. The god himself, who embodies all the elements, is "firm," "steadfast," or "resting"; his *fifth motion* is that of rotation while standing in one place.

The directions can also be conceived as *regions*: the central (fifth) region and the four quarters spaced around it.

This is why the Pythagoreans regarded the number five as a representative of the fixed world axis.573 The Pythagorean idea clearly corresponds with the older Hindu symbolism of the directions. In addition to the standard four directions, Hindu doctrine knows a fifth, called the "fixed direction," the polar centre.574

In China, too, the pole is the immovable fifth direction, the "central palace" around which the cardinal points are spaced.575 And in Mexico, Nahuatl symbolism asserts that "five is the number of the centre."576

In the "ideal" kingdom of heaven the Universal Monarch stands at the centre, and all the elements of life—fire, water, air, and seed—flow from the god-king in four brilliant streams. Often interpreted as four sons of the creator, the streams mark out the four quarters of the cosmic isle, or "earth."

Let us consider first the Egyptian symbolism of the directional streams. According to the Egyptian creation texts, the great god, standing alone, brought forth as his own "speech" the primeval matter—or sea of "words"—which congealed into an enclosure. The Egyptians associate this pouring out of the seed or life elements with four luminous streams flowing from the central sun. The four emanations are the four "sons" of Atum or the Four Sons of Horus, each identified with a quarter of the heavenly kingdom.577 Importantly, the Egyptians term these paths of light the "Four Khu": they are the "words of power"—streams of creative "speech" coursing through the four divisions of organized space.

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572 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 184.

573 Delatte, *Etudes sur la Litterature Pythagoricienne*, 153-54.

574 *Rig Veda*, IX. 74.6; IX. 113.8.

575 De Saussure, *Les Origines de l'Astronomie Chinoise*, 159-60, 230.

576 Dejourne, *Burning Water*, 72.

577 Budge, *op. cit.*, 226; W.M. Muller, *Egyptian Mythology*, 46, 95, 112.

The *Pyramid Texts* call these "the four blustering winds which are about you."[578] The Four Sons of Horus "send the four winds." In one source the four winds issue from the mouth of Amen.[579] In the *Book of the Dead* they are "the four blazing flames which are made for [or as] the Khu [words of power]," [580] while the *Coffin Texts* invoke them as the "four gods who are powerful and strong, who bring the water."[581]

The Egyptians also interpreted the four paths of light as "arrows" launched by the creator toward the four quarters. (In hieroglyphs, the arrow means "shaft of light.") It was an ancient practice of the Egyptian king, on assuming the throne, to release an arrow, in each of the four directions,[582] thus reenacting the creation, or organization of the celestial kingdom. The arrow is *sat*, which means "to shoot," but also "to pour out"; for the four arrows launched by the king signified the waters of life originally "poured out" by the creator, whom the king personified. *Sat* also means "to sow" or "to scatter seed abroad"; which is to say, the four streams carried to the four corners the creative seed of abundance.[583] By launching the four arrows the local king proclaimed himself the Universal Monarch and sanctified *his* kingdom as a duplication of the primeval abode.

In Egypt the cross—as the symbol of the four directional streams—possesses two important meanings. The form , *un*, signifies "coming to life," for the directional streams shone forth with the daily birth of the central sun (*i.e.*, with the setting of the solar orb). In the form (or), *ami*, the cross means "to be in" or "to be enclosed by"—in reference to the unified space *enclosed* within the womb of the mother goddess .

When certain Egyptologists first encountered the symbol of the goddess Nut , they saw in it "a pictorial symbol of primitive Eden divided by the four-fold river."[584] That conclusion would gain little credence among modern Egyptologists, yet it is much closer to the truth than the bland explanations currently in fashion. The four streams of life, emanating from the creator, coursed through the womb of Nut, the Holy Land. Thus the deceased implores the goddess, "Give me the water and the wind which are in thee."[585]

Another symbol of the "holy abode" is the sign [586] showing a cross of arrows superimposed upon a shield. The glyph is precisely equivalent to the symbol of Nut , for Nut, the Great Protectoress, was the cosmic shield, and the four streams of life, enclosed within the womb of Nut, were the same as the shafts or arrows of light launched toward the four corners.

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578 *Pyramid Text* 497.

579 Gaster, *op. cit.*, 5.

580 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 414.

581 Faulkner, *The Coffin Texts*, 1. Often the Egyptians represented the four streams by four vases or "four crocodiles." (The crocodile is an Egyptian symbol of flowing water.) Renouf, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 78. The four crocodiles "live by the Words of Power"—that is, they come to life through, or as, the outward-flowing speech of the creator. On attaining the heavenly kingdom, the deceased king beseeches the crocodiles (rivers): "Let not thy fiery water be inflicted upon me." *Ibid.*, 79. As figures of the four life-bearing streams the crocodiles were identified with the four quarters of the Cosmos. *Ibid.*, 97.

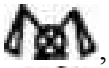
582 Campbell, *Oriental Mythology*, 78.

583 Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol. II, 55.

584 W.T. Warren, *op. cit.*, 179.

585 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 113.

586 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 452.

The land of the four rivers was that which the creator gathered together from the sea of words, his own emanation. The hieroglyphic symbol for "to collect, gather together" and for "the unified land" is  , depicting the primeval enclosure (*shen*) divided into quarters by a cross of two flails. That the flail sign , in the Egyptian language, is read Khu, equates the flail-cross with the four streams of life (*khu*, "words of power") radiating from the central sun.

There is, in other words, a level of Egyptian symbolism that the specialists have yet to penetrate. Standard treatments of the Egyptian Holy Land say little or nothing of the directional streams, though these powers are vital to the symbolism as a whole. And one can be certain that the paths of light and life have nothing to do with an ill-defined "four quarters" of our earth, where they are conventionally located. The four winds, or four rivers, or four pathways, or four shafts of light (arrows) belonged to the *lost* land in heaven, and only through symbolic assimilation to this cosmic dwelling did the terrestrial habitation share in the imagery.

A comparison of Egyptian cross symbolism with that of other lands reveals numerous parallels. The oldest Mesopotamian image of divinity was the sun-cross , symbol of the creator An, the planet Saturn. An, like his counterparts around the world, "brought forth and begat the fourfold wind" within the womb of Tiamat, the cosmic sea.587

The cult worshippers of Ninurta (Saturn) also represented their god by the cross. Hence, the cuneiform ideograms for the fourfold *saru*, "wind," and for *mehu*, "storm wind"—both of which belong to Saturn—take the form of a cross (figs. 22, 23). The Babylonian Saturn inaugurates the day, "coming forth in splendour," and this coming forth of Saturn means the coming forth of the four winds (as in Egypt), for the Akkadian *umum* denotes both "day" and "wind," just as the Sumerian signs UD and UG, both used for "day," occur also in the sense of "wind."588 (The ancient Hebrew expression "until the day blows" conveys the same identity.)

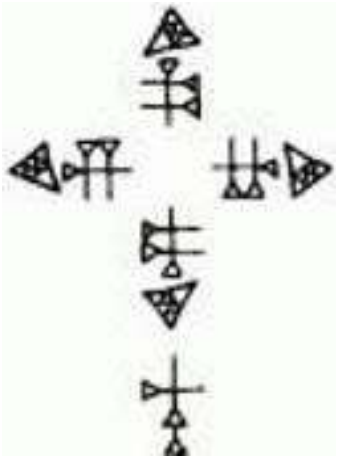


Figure 22. Babylonian *saru*, "wind."

587 Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 62.

588 Hildegard and Julius Lewy, "The Origin of the Week and the Oldest West Asiatic Calendar," 5.

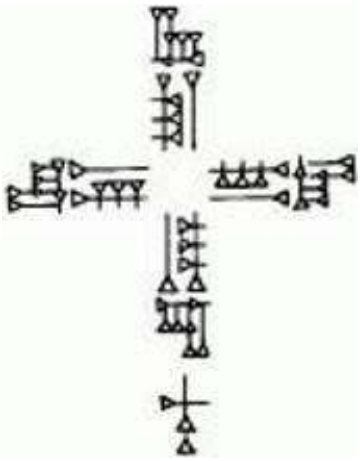


Figure 23. Ideogram for *mehu*, or "storm wind."

Saturn's four winds mark out the quarters or directions of the Cosmos, Saturn's kingdom. Cosmological texts speak of the "furious wind . . . commanding the *directions*":589 the Sumerian *im* and Akkadian *saru*, "wind," also signify "region (or quarter) of heaven."590

As in Egypt, the Mesopotamian four winds coincide with the four rivers of life. Instead of the simple sign , some images show four streams of *water* radiating from the central sun (fig. 24).591 The best-known Mesopotamian figure of these streams is the famous "sun wheel" of Shamash (a god also identified as Saturn). Portrayed are four rays of light and four rivers flowing from the central god to the border of the wheel (fig. 15).

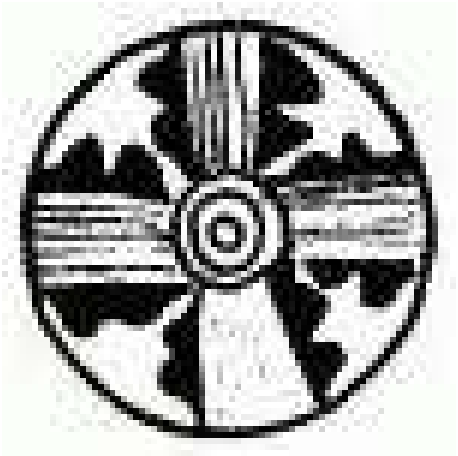


Figure 24. (a) Mycenaean four rivers symbol;

589 *Ibid.* [Emphasis added.]

590 Tallquist, "Himmelsgegende und Winde," 106.

591 Jeremias, *Handbuch der Altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, 252.

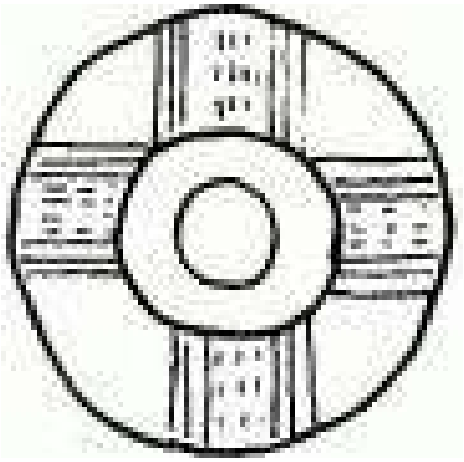


Figure 24. (b) Four rivers symbol, Troy;

Figure 24. (c) Babylonian image presenting the arms of the sun-cross as four rivers.

Hrozny tentatively suggests that Shamash's cross was a sign for "settlement."[592] With this suggestion one is compelled to agree, for the first settlements, organized for a ritual purpose, imitated the heavenly abode. Each sacred territory became "the land of the four rivers" and each ruler "the king of the four quarters."

Geographical limitations did not prevent the Assyro-Babylonian priests from assimilating the map of *their* land to the quartered circle of the *primeval* kingdom. Thus a text reproduced by Virolleaud locates the land of Akkad, Elam, Subartu, and Amurru within the fourfold enclosure of the sun .[593] "Every land," states Jeremias, "has its 'paradise,' which corresponds with the cosmic paradise."[594]

The land of the sun-cross lay within the primeval circle, and this fact will explain why the Babylonian sign of the four *kibrati* or "world quarters" (*i.e.*,) also denoted "the interior" or "the enclosed space."[595]

592 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 184.

593 Jeremias, *op. cit.*, 12.

594 *Ibid.*, 13.

595 Jensen, *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, 167-69.

The terminology offers a fascinating parallel to the Egyptian *ami* ( ), "to be in," "to be enclosed by." To dwell in the land of the four rivers is to occupy the Saturnian enclosure.596

The same overlapping interpretations of the four streams occur in Hindu symbolism. Here the cross and the circle, according to one observer, represent "the traditional abode of their primeval ancestors . . . And let us ask what better picture or more significant characters in the complicated alphabet of symbolism could have been selected for the purpose than a circle and a cross—the one to denote a region of absolute purity and perpetual felicity, the other those four perennial streams that divided and watered the several quarters of it."597

The Hindu Holy Land lies within the world wheel, turned by the stationary sun at the centre. The spokes of the wheel, delimiting the four quarters, "have their foundation in the single centre which is Surya [the sun]," notes Agrawala.598

In the ritual of the *Satapatha Brahmana* the spokes of the wheel become "arrows" launched in the four directions and carrying the life elements to the four corners. The arrows sent in one direction "are fire," those in another "are the waters," those in another "are wind," and those in another "are the herbs."599 The *Paippalada* or Kashmirian *Artharva Veda* terms the latter flow of arrows "food." The idea seems to be that of abundance or "plenty" radiating from the heart of the Cosmos (and thus answering to the four Egyptian arrows [*sat*] transmitting the seed of abundance to the outermost limits of the kingdom). The Hindus symbolized these shafts of light by setting afire the spokes of the sacred wheel.600

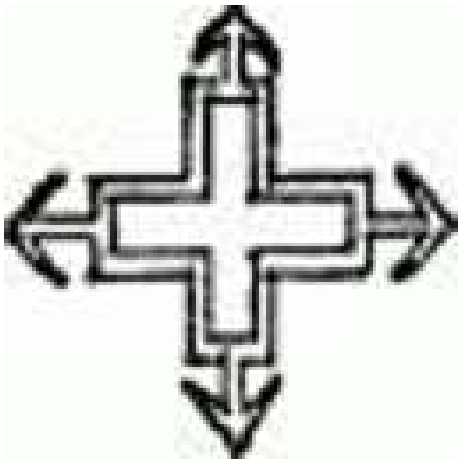


Figure 25. Hindu cross.

A pictorial image of the four streams occurs on ancient Hindu coins depicting the arms of the sun-cross as arrows directed toward the four corners (fig. 25).

Every ancient Indian settlement reflected the primeval map of the Cosmos, its unified domain lying within the sacred circle and its four primary streets answering to the celestial crossroads. The settlement's organization

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596 *Ibid.*, 472. Saturn's streams of light illuminate "the interior of the Apsu (cosmic sea)." As in Egypt, the explosive shafts of light were interpreted as four streams of "speech" radiating to the four corners. The "four winds" and "four world directions," according to Jeremias, correspond to the creator. *Op. cit.*, 148.

597 Quoted in W.T. Warren, *op. cit.*, 179-80.

598 *The Thousand Syllabled Speech*, Vol. I, 158.

599 Whitney, *Atharva Veda*, III.iii.

600 Eggeling, *Satapatha Brahmana*, III, 5.3.14-16.

reenacted the creation. As noted by W. Muller, the Hindu sacred city "duplicates the Cosmos in wood, brick and stone: its axes [north-south; east-west] demarcate the four quarters of the universe."601

Muller finds the same concept of the quartered kingdom in Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Each sacred habitation appears as "the celestial city of the king" and each ruler as the wheel-king. "State and nation represent a quartered universe [Cosmos]," writes Muller. Every image of the sacred "settlement" reflects the image of the "world"—the circle and cross.602

In China, the emperor stands symbolically at the pole, while ranged around him are the powers of the cardinal points.603 The cosmic centre is *ch'ien*, from which, to use Jung's phraseology, "the four emanations go forth, like the heavenly forces extending through space."604 At the *ch'ien*, the centre, the four *she* or world quarters converge.605

The ideal celestial organization finds expression in the ancient Chinese hieroglyph . The sign, according to C. Hentze, denotes the *contree suburbaine* or settlement around a centre.606 Is this not once more the primeval "place" sustained by the outward flow of "life" (or "arrows") from the central god?

L'Orange, in his studies of cosmic symbolism in the Near East, notes that the great residential cities of Ekbatana, Darabjird, and Firuzabad were patterned after the wheel of the Cosmos, with the king appearing at the intersection of the crossroads. "Wall and fosse are traced mathematically with the compass, as an image of the heavens, a projection of the upper hemisphere on earth. The two axis streets, one running north-south and the other east-west, divide the city into four quadrants which reflect the four quarters of the world. At the very point of intersection, in the very axis of the world wheel, the palace is situated, here sits the king, 'The Axis and Pole of the World,' 'The King of the four Quadrants of the World' . . ."607

To this city of the wheel also corresponds the imagery of Jerusalem and Palestine. The terrestrial city and Holy Land, in more than one medieval map, appear in the ideal form of a quartered circle , for such was the image of the Eden paradise, with its four directional streams. And this is why Solomon and Hezekiah, in constructing works for the distribution of Jerusalem's waters, sought to imitate the four rivers of paradise—even to the point of naming one stream Gihon (a river of Eden) and declaring that from beneath the temple these streams flowed out over the whole world.608

The ancient Etruscans, followed by the Romans, looked to the same image of the fourfold Cosmos in laying out the plan of the sacred city. The surveyors, according to W. Muller, sought to map out the "terrestrial image of a celestial prototype," and their division of the land into four regions—the *Roma quadrata*—"reflects a powerful cosmological model: the quartered earth of the Roman world image."609

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601 *Die Heilige Stadt*, 124.

602 *Ibid.*, 145*ff.*

603 De Saussure, *op. cit.*, 160, 230.

604 Jung, *Mandala Symbolism*, 74.

605 Schlegel, *L'Uranographie Chinoise*, 146.

606 "Cosmogonie du Monde Dresse Debout et du Monde Renversé," 109.

607 L'Orange, *Studies in the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship*, 13; see also W. Muller, *op. cit.*, 130*ff.*

608 W.T. Warren, *op. cit.*, 233.

609 W. Muller, *Die Heilige Stadt*, 21.

It is surely significant that all of the key features of the sun-cross and the enclosed sun-cross reviewed above occur also in the Americas. Often the parallels are stunning. The Omaha Indians, for example, invoke the "Aged One":

. . . *seated with assured* permanency and endurance,

In the centre where converged the paths,

There, exposed to the violence of the four winds,

you sat,

Possessed with power to receive supplications,

Aged One . . .610

To reside at the intersection of the celestial crossroads is to "sit" (rest) at the cosmic centre, the abode of "permanency" and "endurance." This "centre" is also the place where the "four winds" meet, for the four winds and heavenly pathways are synonymous.

Burland relates that the symbol of the Mexican god Xiuhtechuhtli—the "Old, Old One," the lord of the central fire at the pole—was "a white cross of the Four Directions in the black background of the night."611

The Inca Yupanqui, writes Nuttall, "raised a temple in Cuzco to the Creator who, superior to the sun [solar orb], could rest and light the world from one spot." This central sun was represented by a cross.612

Indeed, the sun-cross is a symbol of the primeval god throughout the Americas—from the Inca of Peru to the Eskimos of Alaska. Wherever the New World symbolism can be examined in sufficient detail, one finds that the cross possessed the same significance as in the Old World.

The best authorities tell us the native American sun-cross depicts the "four winds"—conceived as visible, even violent flows of life and energy from a *central* or *stationary* god. (That is, the winds are just the opposite of the incongruous abstractions to which they have been reduced by so many mythologists.) The four winds are the "breath" of the sun-god (as in ancient Egypt), bearing the seed of life from the centre to the four corners. Thus the Mayan *Ik* means at once "wind," "breath," and "life." Like the Egyptian streams of *sat* it is "the causer of germination."613

In Mexico, Quetzalcoatl, "god of the Four Motions," was represented by the sun-cross, and this symbol explains his title, "Lord of the four winds." According to Nuttall, the cross "had a deeper meaning than has been realized, for it represents life-giving breath carrying with it the seeds of the four vital elements, emanating from the central lord of life, [and] spreading to the four quarters . . ."614

Also noted by Nuttall is the use of the cross in Copan, where it "is associated with a figure in *repose*, occupying the *Middle*, and four puffs of breath or air, laden with life-seeds, emanating from this."615

Just as the Egyptians personified the four emanations as four "sons" of the central god, so did the Mexicans. From the supreme god Ometeotl issued the four Tezcatlipocas, "the primordial forces which were to generate the history of the world." The four sons corresponded to the four quarters of the world.616

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610 Alexander, *op. cit.*, 19. [Emphasis added.]

611 Burland, *The Gods of Mexico*, 131.

612 Nuttall, *Fundamental Principles of Old and New World Civilization*, 160-161.

613 J. Eric and S. Thompson, *Maya History and Religion*, 257.

614 *Op. cit.*, 223.

615 *Ibid.*, 280. [Emphasis added.]

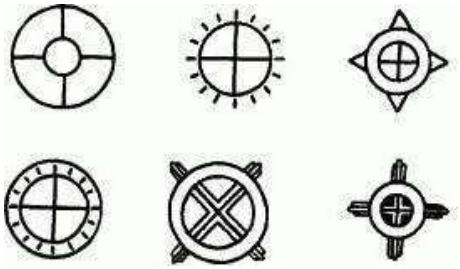

Figure 26. Variations of the enclosed sun-cross in the Mississippi Valley.

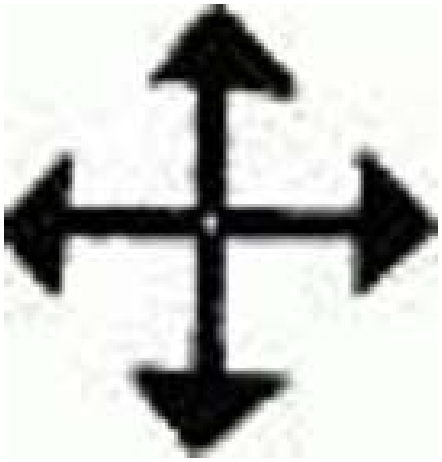

Figure 27. Arapaho sign of the four winds.

The same powers—central god and four emissions—were represented by the five Tlalocs, who, like the Mayan Bacabs and Chacs, "were set at four cardinal points and at the centre of the heavens."617 From his dwelling at the world summit Tlaloc sent forth the waters of the four quarters, often symbolized (as in Egypt and India) by four vases. The gods who transmitted the waters to the four corners were the same as the gods of the four winds.618

But there is an even more striking parallel with Old World symbolism: the four streams of light and life were interpreted as *arrows* coursing in the four directions. In the Nahuatl language the word *tonamitl* means at once a "ray or shaft of light" and "the shining arrow." According to the chronicler Ixtlilxochitl, it was a native custom, on consecrating a new territory, "*to shoot with utmost force four arrows in the direction of the four regions of the world.*"619 Thus did the priests sanctify the land as a renewal of the primeval kingdom, in exact accord with the ancient Egyptian practice!

Consistent with the global iconography of the central sun, the American Indians revered the sun-cross and enclosed sun-cross as emblems of the unified domain, the Holy Land. Among the Mexicans "the cross and the circle" are a "native symbol for 'an integral state,'" writes Nuttall. Illustrating this symbolism is the famous Mexican Calendar Wheel, displaying four principal and four secondary rays (or "arrows"), signifying the four quarters and their four subdivisions. This wheel of Time, states Nuttall,620 portrays the ideal habitation, and the prototype lay in heaven, not on earth. The wheel is "as clearly an image of the nocturnal heaven as it is of a

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616 Léon-Portilla, "Mythology of Ancient Mexico," in Kramer, *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, 449-50.

617 Roys, *The Book of the Chilam Balam*, 67.

618 See, for example, J. Eric and S. Thompson, *op. cit.*, 270-71.

619 Nuttall, *op. cit.*, 255.

620 *Ibid.*, 198.

vast territorial state which once existed in the valley of Mexico, and had been established as a reproduction upon earth of the harmonious order and fixed laws which apparently governed the heavens."621

From the center of the ancient Inca city of Cuzco, four roads radiated in the four directions. At the intersection of the crossroads rested a golden vase from which a fountain flowed. Thus did the four roads imitate the four paths or streams transporting the waters of life to the four quarters.

The Mayan *Book of Chilam Balam* offers the following map of northern Yucatan:622

Figure 28. Cosmological map of northern Yucatan.

Roys reports that this map—adapting actual geography to the primordial ideal—"is fairly typical in Maya documents."623 Here again is the *Roma quadrata*, the celestial Jerusalem, or Egyptian *Neter ta*, the Holy Land.

The Delaware sacred text called the *Walum Olum* records the primeval dwelling of the Great Spirit by the image . This was the nation's ancestral homeland, they say.624

A group of anthropologists, on examining the *Walum Olum*, reported that the four points on the circle "indicate the four quarters of the earth." By "earth" they obviously meant the terrestrial landscape. But if the quartered circle refers to our earth,625 then the dot inside certainly is not the sun, in spite of the steadfast opinion of solar mythologists.

In this case, the experts possessed the answer without recognizing it. The text itself identifies the sign with "the place where the Great Spirit stayed." To this statement the commentators add: "Concentric circles or a circle with a dot in the centre means divine or hallowed."626 Combining the two statements one obtains a clear-cut definition of the sign as "the divine or hallowed place where the Great Spirit stayed." Denoted is the quartered, *primeval* land, of which the terrestrial Holy Land was but a symbol.

As a final example, I note that the sun-cross and the life-giving streams are recalled even in Hawaiian myth. Here the creator Teave is the "Father-Mother" from whom "life coursed to the four directions of the

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621 *Ibid.*, 274.

622 Roy, *op. cit.*, 125.

623 *Ibid.*, 125.

624 Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society, *Walum Olum*, 11.

625 *Ibid.*, 11.

626 *Ibid.*

world."[627] From the cosmic centre and zenith, Teave organized the celestial "kingdom" with his "*flaming cross of shining white light*," "the first and foremost Cross of God."[628] The "Primordial Lord of the Sun" (Teave) transmitted the life elements to the four corners through the agency of four assistant gods: ". . . The blood of life pulsated from the infinite and coursed to the north, east, south, west, via the Four Sacred Hearts of God, the deities Tane, Tanaoroa, Tu, Rono."[629]

The widespread traditions of the primordial kingdom and the four life-streams reflect a consistent memory. On every continent one finds a compulsion to organize the native land after a cosmic original, defined by the enclosed sun-cross . The focus is the primeval ground occupied by the great father—whose home is the "earth" brought forth in the creation legend. By superimposing the map of Saturn's Earth onto the local landscape, the ancients consecrated their native territory as a likeness, or a renewal, of the celestial abode.

The Four-Eyed Or Four-Faced God

In the ancient Egyptian Heb-Sed festival, the king ascends to the throne of Osiris, where he is deified as the great god's successor. To certify his authority as Universal Monarch, he launches four arrows toward the four corners, then assumes his throne, turning to the four cardinal points in succession.[630]

By facing the four directions the king repeats the feat of the great god; for the Universal Monarch, occupying the steadfast centre (or fifth region), ceaselessly turned round about, sending his rays of life through the four divisions of unified space.

The classical historian Diodorus tells us that when the name Osiris is translated into Greek it means "many-eyed"—"and properly so; for in shedding his rays in every direction he surveys with many eyes, as it were, all land and sea." To Osiris, Herodotus compares the Greek Dionysus—a god who, in the *Bacchic Hymn*, shines "like a star, with a fiery eye in every ray."[631]

By facing the four directions and by sending forth the four directional streams, the Universal Monarch becomes the god of four faces or four eyes. "Homage to thee, O thou who hast four faces," reads a line of the *Pyramid Texts*.[632] Osiris, as the Ram of Mendes, is the god of "four faces on one neck."[633]

The Hindu *Atharva Veda* speaks of the "four heavenly directions, having the wind as lord, upon which the sun looks out."[634] This, of course, can only be the central sun, who is Brahma, a god of *four faces.* The myths also attribute four faces to Shiva.[635] The central sun Prajapati takes the form of the four-eyed, four-faced, and four-armed Vivvakarman, the "all maker."[636] Agni, too, faces "in all directions,"[637] as does Krishna.[638]

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627 Melville, *Children of the Rainbow*, 18.

628 *Ibid.*, 18.

629 *Ibid.*, 40, 126, 140.

630 Campbell, *op. cit.*, 78; Jung, *Aion*, 198.

631 Herodotus, I.11.2-3.

632 Quoted in Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 85.

633 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 65.

634 Whitney, *Atharva Veda*, 52.

635 Keith, *Indian Mythology*, 110.

636 *Ibid.*, 52.

637 *Ibid.*, 41.

Chinese myths recall a four-eyed sage named Ts'ang Chieh, a legendary inventor of writing (*i.e.*, the Universal Monarch).639 The old Greek god Argos, in the *Aigimios* of Hesiod, looks "this way and that with four eyes."640 Macrobius tells us the great god Janus was sometimes represented with four faces, in allusion to the four quarters of the Cosmos.641

Among the Tarahumara in North America, the cross represented the god Hikuli, "the four-faced god who sees all things."642 The "Central Lord" of Mexican ritual, represented by the cross, is "He who looks in four directions."643

There can no longer be any doubt that the four-eyed or four-faced god is Saturn, for the sun-planet appears in Babylonian myth as Ea (Sumerian Enki)—a god of *four eyes* that "behold all things."644 The Phoenician El—Saturn—has four eyes, as does the Orphic Kronos (Saturn). The Chinese Yellow Emperor Huang-ti—identified as Saturn—is also four-eyed.645 The four-eyes, or four faces, become intelligible only in connection with the five regions—the polar centre and the four divisions ranged around it.

The Foundation Stone

Residing at the immovable centre of the Cosmos, Saturn was the stone or rock of foundation, the prototype of the cornerstone (situated where the four corners meet— *). The four beams of light which radiated from the Saturnian stone appeared to sustain the world wheel at its "four corners"* *, so that, in many myths, the life-bearing streams are synonymous with the "four pillars of the world."*

In the mystic traditions reviewed by Manly P. Hall (Masonic, Hermetic, Qabalistic, Rosicrucian, etc.), the planet Saturn looms as the elementary power of creation. The planet-god "was always worshipped under the symbol of the base or footing, inasmuch as he was considered to be the substructure upholding creation," states Hall.646

The writer is, of course, thinking in metaphysical terms, and when he speaks of "creation" he doubtless means something much different from the "creation" discussed in the foregoing sections. Yet his summary, when stripped of metaphysics and solar terminology, accurately conveys an age-old idea: "The *solar system* [read: Cosmos] was organized by forces operating inward from the great ring of the Saturnian sphere; and since the beginning of all things was under the control of Saturn, the most reasonable inference is that the first forms of worship were dedicated to him in his peculiar symbol—the stone. Thus the intrinsic nature of Saturn is synonymous with that spiritual rock which is the enduring foundation of the *Solar temple* [read: dwelling of the central sun]."647

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638 Suhr, *The Mask, the Unicorn and the Messiah*, 89.

639 Ferguson, *Chinese Mythology*, 31.

640 Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, Vol. II, 379.

641 Cited in Faber, *The Origins of Pagan Idolatry*, Vol I, 166.

642 Alexander, *op. cit.*, 176-77.

643 Perry, *Lord of the Four Quarters*, 200.

644 Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 69. The reference is to Marduk, who has four eyes which "behold all things even as he (Ea)."

645 Derk Bodde, "Myths of Ancient China," in Kramer, *Mythologies*, 374.

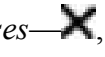
646 *An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolic Philosophy*, cviii.

647 *Ibid.*, ccviii. [Emphasis added.]

In the earlier symbolism of the Foundation Stone, there is no hint of solar associations, and the stone is not a "spiritual [invisible] rock," but the *shining center* around which the created earth, or Cosmos, congealed.

The Egyptians knew the Foundation Stone as the Benben. Frankfort writes that the "first piece of solid matter actually created by Atum in the primeval ocean . . . was a stone, the Benben; and it had originated from a drop of the seed of Atum which fell into the primeval ocean."[648] More precisely, one should say that Atum *was* the seed and the seed *was* the Benben stone—the first thing to stabilize at the cosmic centre. "Thou [Atum] didst shine forth as Benben," recalls a *Pyramid Text*, in connection with the first phases of creation.[649]

Atum, or Re, is the "Great Seed," and this aspect of the god is conveyed by the term *ben* (from which the word *Benben* was produced): *ben* signifies "to beget." But the same word means "to go round": the Benben is the steadfast *seed-stone*, which, turning round about, moved the wheel of the Cosmos.

From Atum, the Benben, flowed the four streams of life, demarcating the four quarters or corners of the cosmic dwelling. It is thus vital that *ben* signifies "corner," while the hieroglyphic sign for "corner" is .[650] Since the stone of foundation lay at the *center*, the "corner" of the *ben* cannot have originally meant the corner of a square or rectangular edifice—even if later generations came to conceive it as such. Denoted is one of the four "quarters" converging on *the central stone* . This meaning is suggested by another sign— , *apt*, signifying "division of the holy abode." The sacred edifice is divided into four quarters or corners defined by the angles of the *ben* . Also relevant here are the sign *ses*—  , "to divide," and the common sign of "the holy abode"— , *nut.* The "four corners" meet at the Benben (Atum), the Foundation Stone.

"Go to the streamings of the Nile [that is, the heavenly waters] and there you will find a stone that has a spirit," stated an old alchemical source.[651] Clearly, the tradition refers to the Foundation Stone, the central source of the four streams radiating life to the inhabitants of the celestial kingdom.

This quality of the central sun persists in Hebrew and Muslim imagery of Adam, the Heaven Man. The Nassenes esteemed Adam as the "rock" and "cornerstone."[652] Writes Jung: "The stone is indeed of supreme importance, because it fulfills the function of Adam Kadmon as the 'capital stone,' from which all the upper and lower hosts in the work of creation are brought into being."[653]

The theosophic *Zohar* declares, "The world did not come into being until God took a certain stone, which is called the foundation stone, and cast it into the abyss so that it held fast there, and from it the world was planted. This is the central point of the universe, and on this point stands the Holy of Holies."[654]

Patai summarized the tradition: "In the middle of the Temple and constituting the floor of the Holy of Holies, was a huge native rock which was adorned by Jewish legends with all the peculiar features of an Omphalos, A Navel of the Earth. This rock, called in Hebrew *Ebhen Shetiyyah*, the Stone of Foundation, was the first solid [*i.e.*, stable, stationary] thing created, and was placed by God amidst the as yet boundless fluid of the primeval

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648 *Kingship and the Gods*, 153.

649 *Ibid.*

650 Énel, *Les Origines de la Genèse et l'Enseignement des Temples de l'Ancienne Égypte*, 30.

651 Cited in Jung, *Alchemical Studies*.

652 Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 437.

653 *Ibid.*, 446-47, citing Kabbala denudata I, Part 1, 16.

654 *Ibid.*, 447n, citing Zohar I, 231a.

waters. Legend has it that just as the body of an embryo is built up in its mother's womb from the navel, so God built up the earth concentrically around this Stone."655

Is this not the same account as that recorded by the Egyptians, who say that Atum, the masculine Foundation Stone, came to rest at the cosmic centre, and that the created "land" or "earth"—the womb of the mother goddess—congealed around the central god?

Hebrew and Muslim traditions locate the Foundation Stone in the paradise of Eden. The Arabic term for the stone is *es-Sakra*—"the Rock." Thus the Mosque of Omar—known as *Kubbat es-Sakra*, "Dome of the Rock"—bears on its western facade the inscription: "The Rock of the Temple—from the Garden of Eden."656 The legends relate that the Foundation Stone conceals beneath it all the world's waters and winds: "All sweet water comes from under the Holy Rock," notes Wensinck; "thereafter it spreads over the earth." A Muslim text states that "all rivers and clouds and vapours and winds come from under the Holy Rock in Jerusalem."657 This can only mean that the four rivers of Eden, which water "the whole earth," have their origin in, or under, the Foundation Stone.

Though the stone belongs to the centre, it is, like the Egyptian Benben, a *cornerstone*, for one reads in Isaiah, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion [*i.e.*, Jerusalem] for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious *corner* stone, a sure foundation."658 The *center* is the intersection of the *four corners* .

That the Foundation Stone stood at the source of the four directional paths is the consistent theme in all of the ancient architectural plans reviewed by W. Muller—from Europe to Southeast Asia. When the Roman augur marked out the four directions of the sacred city he sat upon a stone—which denoted the *center*, the intersection of the north-south and east-west axes.659 (One naturally thinks also of the *lapis niger* or black stone of the Roman Forum, signifying the centre of the world.)

The map of ancient Ireland shows four provinces—Connaught, Ulster, Leinster, and Munster—surrounding the *central* province of Mide ("the Middle"), where was situated the *Aill na-Mircann*, the "Stone of the Divisions."660 This basic pattern occurs also in the original plan of Nimwegen in the Netherlands: at the intersection of the "four streets of the world" stood a great blue stone.661 A similar stone stood at the symbolic centre of Leiden, from which four main streets radiated in four directions.662

At the center of the sacred Hindu dwelling, where the directional paths meet, stood the Foundation Stone, considered as the fixed point from which creation began.663 In Thailand the Foundation Stone of the royal palace, lying at the intersection of the crossroads, was the "corner-stone of the land."664

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655 Patai, *Man and Temple*, 85.

656 Vilnay, *Legends of Jerusalem*, 17.

657 Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth*, 34.

658 Isaiah 28: 16. [Emphasis added.]

659 W. Muller, *Die Heilige Stadt*, 38*ff*.

660 *Ibid.*, 94.

661 *Ibid.*, 198.

662 *Ibid.*, 198-99.

663 *Ibid.*, 198-99.

664 *Ibid.*, 145. Such traditions illuminate the image of Oedipus sitting on a stone where the ways part into many roads. O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 393.

Nor can one ignore the identity of the Foundation Stone and the planet Saturn. Arabic thought often identifies the Foundation Stone of Eden/Jerusalem with the sacred stone of the Ka'ba in Mecca.665 (Tradition says that Adam himself sat upon the Ka'ba stone, and that "forty years before Allah created the heavens and earth the Ka'ba was a dry spot floating on the water and from it the world has been spread out."666 It is reported that in the pre-Islamic period the statue of a god Hubal stood inside the Ka'ba above the opening of a well. The well symbolized the central source of the world's waters, and *Hubal was the planet Saturn.*

In the tradition reconstructed by Hildegard Lewy, the statue of Hubal filled the same purpose as the stone. When the stone was removed "a statue of the planet Saturn [Hubal] had served in its place as the visible symbol of the planetary god to whom the Ka'ba was dedicated."667

But the Meccan stone, as affirmed by numerous accounts, symbolized the very rock which the Hebrews called *Ebhen Shetiyyah*—the Foundation Stone.668 The Mohammedans, writes Lewy, "were fully aware of the functions of the sacred stone of Mecca and Jerusalem. The sacred stone of Jerusalem represented the same god [Saturn] as the Black Stone of Mecca."669

The Foundation Stone is thus an indispensable ingredient in the symbolism of the four life-bearing streams. The stone denotes Saturn in his character as the steadfast support of the turning Cosmos and the source of the radiating life elements.

The Four Pillars Of Heaven

There is an aspect of the four streams which seems to defy nature and reason: they are called "pillars."

The Egyptian Four Sons of Horus appear as four supports holding aloft the womb of heaven (Nut). But the standard analysis of the four pillar-gods, by dispersing them to an indefinable "four corners" of our earth, deprives them of their concrete aspect as *life-streams flowing from the central sun.* When the great god identifies the Four Sons of Horus as the spirits who "have sprung from my body and who shall be with me in the form of everlasting judges . . . ," it is clear that the four powers occupy a *particular place.*670 Thus the

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665 "At resurrection day, the Ka'ba Stone, which is in holy Mecca, will go to the Foundation Stone in holy Jerusalem, bringing with it the inhabitants of Mecca, and it shall become joined to the foundation Stone." Vilnay, *op. cit.*, 17.

666 Wensinck, *Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth*, 18. As is well known, the stone of the Ka'ba is black ("the black stone"). But it was not always so, for the legends claim that before Adam left Eden, it was a white hyacinth. This is, in fact, a theme which occurs elsewhere: the white stone (or god) loses his radiance, becoming "black." Though I intend to review this theme in a subsequent volume, it is appropriate to note here that, in a widespread myth, Saturn, the primeval sun, passes into a figure of death and darkness, a prototype of Satan. Saturn becomes the "black planet." ("Saturn is frequently called the 'black' or 'dark' planet," observes Hildegard Lewy, *Origin and Significance of the Mâgen Dâwîd*, 339.)

667 Hildegard Lewy, *op. cit.*, 360.

668 *Ibid.*, 362.

669 *Ibid.* The myth of the four rivers flowing from the Foundation Stone and defining the four quarters of the world proves to be most tenacious. O'Neill, for example, cites the following from an old magazine, *The Post Angel*, which published a section called "Answers to Correspondents," in 1971:

"Q.Why does the needle in the sea-compass always turn to the North?"

"A. The most received opinion is that there is under our North Pole a huge black rock, from under which the Ocean issueth in 4 currents answerable to the 4 corners of the Earth or 4 winds: which rock is thought to be all of a loadstone, so that by a kind of affinity it draweth all such like stones or other metals touched by them towards it." O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 129.

Even when the cosmic imagery has become confused with geography, the central features are the same as in the Egyptian version expressed thousands of years earlier.

670 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 497.

Pyramid Texts locate Atum-Re at "the *place* of the four pillars,"671 and this "place" is doubtless the womb of Nut, the Holy Abode . *The four streams are conceived as four pillars radiating from the immovable Foundation Stone to sustain Saturn's Cosmos at four cardinal points.*

The Hindu *Satapatha Brahmana*, in setting forth the ritual of the world wheel, extols the great god Vishnu with the words: "O Vishnu, with beams of light thou didst hold fast the earth on all sides."672 The four primary rays of the Hindu central sun constitute the pillars of the celestial dwelling . (The connection is implicit in the English word *beam*, which means both a ray of light and a fixed support.)

So also do the four winds serve as pillars. The Ethiopic *Book of Enoch* reads: "I saw the treasures of all the winds: I saw how He had furnished with them the whole creation and the firm foundations of the earth. And I saw the *corner stone* of the earth: I saw the four winds . . . : these are the pillars of the earth."673 In architectural representations of Eden's four rivers, they too appear as pillars.674 The Mayan Bacabs, who personify the four directional streams, are the *four props of heaven.* Similarly, in Hawaiian myth, the life elements radiate to the four corners of heaven by means of the four spirits, Tane, Rono, Tanaoroa and Tu—called "the Four Male *Pillars* of Creation."675

On our earth no one has ever seen a beam of light, a wind, or a river serving as a pillar, yet this is the extraordinary function of the four paths of light and life flowing from the creator. As spokes of the world wheel , the streams appeared to "pillar apart" and to steady the revolving enclosure.

Symmetrical Elaborations Of The Sun-Cross

In the course of many centuries the sun-cross often acquired complex and symmetrical associations, as schools of myth and theology combined various interpretations of the four streams in formal systems. These evolved systems often identify each quarter of sacred space with an element, colour, season, or representative animal.

An early example of this tendency is the assignment of a different substance to each of the four paradisal rivers. While Marco Polo journeyed to the court of Kublai Khan he was told the legend of an old ruler called the Sheikh of the Mountain. The sheikh was distinguished for his possession of the world's most beautiful garden, containing the best fruits of the earth. Through the garden passed four conduits, one flowing with wine, one with milk, one with honey, and one with water. The sheikh proclaimed his garden to be paradise.676

Hindu literature describes the four rivers of paradise as flowing respectively with milk, butter, honey, and wine.677 Similarly, Strabo relates the report of Calamus that the first race of men enjoyed a blissful land in which "corn of all sorts abounded as plentifully as dust does at present; and the fountains poured forth streams, some of water, some of milk, some of honey, some of wine, and some of oil."678

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671 *Pyramid Text* 158. [Emphasis added.]

672 Eggeling, *op. cit.*, 5.3.14.

673 Book of Enoch 18: 1-3. [Emphasis added.]

674 Cirlot, *op. cit.*, 18.

675 Melville, *Children of the Rainbow*, 33. [Emphasis added.]

676 Butterworth, *The Tree at the Navel of the Earth*, 53.

677 Faber, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 16.

678 *Ibid.*, 15.

In a corresponding manner each river receives a different *color*. The four rivers of the Chinese polar paradise Kwen-lun possess a remarkable feature: one is blue, another white, another red, and another black.679 Each of the Hindu four rivers has its special colour.680 The Kalmucks of Siberia describe a primordial sea from which four rivers flowed "toward the different points of the compass," each issuing from the mouth of a different animal and identified with different colours: "The eastern river contains silver sand, the southern blue jewel sand, the western red jewel sand and the northern gold sand."681

In developing the symbolism of the terrestrial kingdom, the ancients borrowed from the imagery of the celestial, assigning a different colour, element, or season to each geographical "cardinal point." Of course the celestial prototype, the sun-cross , does not itself suggest which terrestrial direction should be associated with "fire" and which with "air," or whether one special direction should be linked with "blue" and another with "red." Thus there seems to be no single pattern of the symbolism from one land to another.

But the tendency toward such formalization was universal. Both the Mexicans and the Zuni identified the four directions with respective colours and "elements" (air, water, fire, earth), though the specific relationship differed, as indicated below:682

	MEXICO	ZUNI
North	Red, Fire	Yellow, Air
West	Yellow, Earth	Blue, Water
South	Blue, Air	Red, Fire
East	Green, Water	White, Earth
Center	Many colors	All colors

The Maya, on the other hand, connected the east with red, the north with white, the west with black, and the south with yellow. Throughout North America, according to Alexander, the directional gods were associated with respective colours, though there "is no uniformity in the distribution of the colours to the several regions."683

Buddhist symbolism shows four rays radiating from the heads of Makasukha to the four corners, each ray associated with a colour,684 while the Chinese developed the following associations of the directions:

DIRECTION	COLOR	ELEMENT	SEASON
North	black	water	winter
West	white	metal	autumn
South	red	fire	summer
East	green	wood	spring
Center	yellow	earth	

Taken alone, these varied connections tell us little, for such developments are largely a matter of local innovation. What is important for our analysis is the unanimity with which the ancients conceived their land as four quarters around a centre, identifying the quarters with the primal life elements which all traditions describe flowing from the central sun in radiant streams.

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679 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 909.

680 Lenormant, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 19-21.

681 Uno Holmberg, *Die Religiösen Vorstellungen*, 86-87; *Siberian Mythology*, 358-59.

682 Nuttall, *op. cit.*, 293.

683 Alexander, *op. cit.*, 287.

684 Jung and Kerenyi, *Essays on a Science of Mythology*, 15.

Moreover, there is one aspect of the elaborated symbolism of the four quarters which deserves closer attention—namely, *the connection of the planet Saturn with the centre around which the four "elements" or colors or seasons are ranged.* In the specific associations of the Chinese directions indicated above one recognizes no correspondence with a "general tradition." For example, the Chinese identification of the center with the element "earth" or with the color yellow fails to coincide with any world-wide pattern. Surely it is significant, however, that in China the center, the element "earth," and the colour yellow *all belong uniquely to the planet Saturn*—a startling fact which agrees with the equally startling placement of Saturn at the pole, the cosmic centre in Chinese thought.685 Saturn is Huang-ti, the *Yellow* Emperor, his residence the *Central* Palace from which the four directions radiate.

This character of Saturn prevails in the Chinese symbolism of the five visible planets. Saturn is placed at the centre, while Mercury, Venus, Mars, and Jupiter are spaced at the "four corners" around Saturn. Nothing in the present orbits of the planets would suggest Saturn's location at the centre of this system. In fact, as the outermost visible planet, Saturn would seem the least worthy of such distinction.

But originally, Saturn was the polar sun, the central source of the directional streams, and it was only to be expected that the other four planets, like the four seasons, four colours, or four elements, came to symbolize the powers of the four quarters, their symbolic location possibly being decided by the element with which each planet was identified. As to the "center," Saturn could be the only choice. The order was:

NORTH
Mercury

WEST CENTER EAST
Venus Saturn Jupiter

SOUTH
Mars

This cosmological system receives extensive treatment by Leopold de Saussure.686 To the Chinese, he reports, Saturn corresponded to the sacred centre, around which the cardinal points ranged; symbolism of the terrestrial centre mirrored the symbolism of the celestial pole. The other four planets were equated with the four seasons, elements, and colours, the entire system having its origin in the concept of the four divisions of heaven, to which the polar centre, Saturn's domain, was added as the "fifth."

What is even more extraordinary, the location of Saturn at the polar centre—with the four quarters dispersed around him—was not unique to China. De Saussure finds the same system in Iran. Iranian cosmology connects the five planets with five regions of space, the centre being fixed at the celestial pole. *Placed at the pole was Kevan, the planet Saturn, precisely duplicating the station of the Chinese Saturn.* Here is the system:

NORTH
Mars *(Vahram)*

WEST CENTER EAST
Venus *(Anahid)* Saturn *(Kevan)* Mercury *(Tir)*

SOUTH
Jupiter
(Auharmzd)

685 De Saussure, *La Série Septénaire, Cosmologique et Planétaire*, 340.

686 *Ibid.*, 333-70; *Le Système Cosmologique Sino-Iranienne*, 235-97; *Origine Babylonienne de l'Astronomie Chinoise*, 5-18.

The reader will note that the directional connections of the four peripheral planets do not correspond to the connections in the Chinese system. What is vital is Saturn's central station as the source of the four emanations. "The planet that the Chinese consider as the symbol of the emperor [*i.e.*, Saturn] is associated, in Iran, with the Great One in the Middle of Heaven, which is to say, with the celestial pole; it bears the name . . . of Kevan and it is precisely identified by the translators with Saturn."687

After reviewing the stunning concordance of the Chinese and Iranian symbolism, de Saussure concluded that the Iranian system must have been borrowed from the Chinese. Later, however, following correspondence with the Iranian scholar Junker, de Saussure changed his opinion; for Junker pointed out that the same idea—the polar centre surrounded by four heavens-divisions—prevailed in the older Babylonian and Hindu systems. Therefore, concluded de Saussure, "the division of the universe into a central region and four peripheral divisions [and] the assimilation of the terrestrial sovereign to the celestial pole . . . occurs not only in Chinese cosmology—which is particularly rational, symmetrical and well preserved—but also in Babylonian, Vedic [Hindu] and Iranian cosmologies."688

Most surprising of all, however, was the discovery by de Saussure and Junker that when the principles of the five regions are applied to the oldest enumeration of the sun, moon, and planets in Babylonia, Saturn acquires the central (polar) station.689 "In the most ancient Babylonian series [of planets] based on the number five," states de Saussure, "the planet Saturn is placed, as in China, in the middle."690 The polar Saturn, presiding over the central region and surrounded by the powers of the four quarters, thus occurs in the earliest formal astronomy.

To summarize: The imagery of the quartered kingdom centers on the sign of the sun-cross , depicting Saturn sending the seed of life in the four directions. Ancient mythmakers interpreted the radiating streams as four beams of light, four winds, four rivers, four paths of arrows, or four pillars of the Cosmos .

But the heaven-dividing streams eventually passed into an expanded symbolism, relating each direction to an element, season, colour, or planet. In such elaborate and symmetrical renderings of the quartered kingdom, one recognizes the arbitrary influence of innovation. But the root idea remains consistent from one land to another, and when such symbolism is subject to scrutiny, Saturn looms at the cosmic centre—the "fifth region," the immovable pole around which the directional elements, seasons, planets, etc. are ranged.

687 De Saussure, *Le Système Cosmologique Sino-Iranienne*, 277.

688 "*Origine Babylonienne de l'Astronomie Chinoise*, 18.

689 *Ibid.*, 16-17.

690 *La Série Septénaire*, 358.

VII: Temple, Crown, Vase, Eye, And Circular Serpent

A primary thesis of this book is that the Saturnian configuration provoked many different symbols, whose underlying relationship to a single cosmic form too often goes unnoticed.

When the ancients laid out the sacred city they sought to establish a likeness of the cosmic dwelling, a circle around a fixed centre. And in organizing the first kingdoms, unifying once-separate territories, the founders followed the same celestial plan.

There was only one dwelling of the great god, but this dwelling inspired imitative forms of *varying* scale and *varying* ritual functions. At root the creator's home is simply "the place," "the land," "the holy abode," or "the enclosure." Only with the construction of imitative *cities* does the god's residence become "the cosmic city." And only after the organization of imitative terrestrial *kingdoms* can one meaningfully term the heavenly abode a "celestial kingdom."

What the smallest city and grandest empire have in common is an identical relationship to the Saturnian enclosure. Distinctions of scale "down here" do not alter the fact that the *celestial* city and kingdom are absolutely synonymous.

In addition to the images of the Saturnian band reviewed in the foregoing sections, several others require attention.

The Temple

Like the ancient city and kingdom, the terrestrial shrine copies Saturn's dwelling. (Saturn, as we have seen, founded the "first" temple.) Though the local temple acquired its own special functions and attributes, the ritual leaves no doubt that the *cosmic* "house," "shrine," and "chamber" mean the same thing as the "city of heaven."

Sumerian texts describe the cosmic *city* of Eridu as:

The house *built of silver, adorned with lapis lazuli . . .*

The abyss [cosmic ocean],

the shrine *of the goodness of Enki, befitting the divine decrees,*

Eridu, the pure house *having been built.*691

Conversely, the celestial temple is called "the primeval city" (the very title of many Sumerian cities themselves), and the hymns say of the Kes temple:

Indeed it is a city, indeed it is a city, who know its interior?

The Kes temple is indeed a city,

*who knows its interior?*692

Enki, the Sumerian Saturn, erects his temple or "sea house" as *the crowning act of creation*:

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691 Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 63. [Emphasis added.]

692 Gragg, *The Keš Temple Hymn*, 170-71.

After the water of creation has been decreed,

After the name hegal (Abundance), born of heaven,

Like the plant and herb had clothed the land,

The lord of the abyss, the King Enki,

Enki, the lord who decrees the fates,

Built his house of silver and lapis lazuli:

Its silver and lapis lazuli, like sparkling light.

*The father fashioned fittingly in the abyss.*693

This is the "far-famed house built in the bosom [heart, centre] of the Nether sea."694 The cosmic dwelling becomes the "Good temple built on a good place . . . floating in the sky . . . heaven's midst."695 It is said to "float like a cloud in the midst of the sky."696

In constructing the earthbound copy of the temple above, states Jastrow, the Babylonians strove to make both the exterior and interior "resplendent with brilliant colouring—'brilliant as the sun.'"697 The purpose is clear: to imbue the local temple with a lustre matching that of the prototype. Symbolically, the local temple takes on the radiance of the celestial, becoming the "house of light," "house of the brilliant precinct," or "lofty and brilliant wall"; "the house of great splendour," "the beautiful house," "the brilliant house."698

To deal with the Sumero-Babylonian imagery in its own terms one must understand the cosmic temple not only as the god's house—but more. *The temple fashioned in the abyss is the created "earth."* The Sumerian Ekur, the house of Enlil on the cosmic sea Apsu, means both "temple" and "earth" ("land," "place").699

Gragg confirms the identity of the cosmic temple and the created "earth" when he notes "the cosmic dimensions of the temple. It fills the whole world."700 The Sumerians celebrated the god's shrine as the "pure place, *earth of An*," (that is, *Saturn's Earth*).701

Throughout the previous sections I have contended that Saturn's dwelling produced the original myth of the lost paradise. That the great god's house enclosed the cosmic land of fertility and abundance is the straightforward declaration of the Sumerian temple hymns. (Though some of the lines in the following quotes are broken, one cannot fail to discern the consistent theme):

House, Mountain, like herbs and plants beautifully blooming

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693 Kramer, *op. cit.*, 63.

694 Combe, *Histoire du Culte de Sin*, 121.

695 Gragg, *op. cit.*, 169.

696 Sjöberg and Bergmann, *The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns*, 13.

697 *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 632.

698 *Ibid.*, 641.

699 The same meaning attaches to the Babylonian Esharra, the dwelling which the creator measured out on the cosmic sea. Jastrow calls Esharra "a poetic designation of the earth." *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 431. Jensen relates the term especially to the earth as it appeared at the creation. *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, 188*ff*. The literal meaning is "house of fullness" or "house of fertility."

700 *Op. cit.*, 158.

701 *Ibid.*, 23. [Emphasis added.]

. . . your interior is plentitude.[702]

The temple is built; its abundance is good!

The Kes temple is built; its abundance is good![703]

House with well-formed jars, set up under heaven . . .

(Full of) the abundance of the midst of the sea . . .

Emah, the house of Sara, the faithful man

has enlarged for you (Umma) in plenty . . .

(With) good fortune it is expanding, (its)

. . . abundance and well-being . . .[704]

House . . . from your midst (comes) plenty,

Your treasury (is) a mountain of abundance . . .[705]

Your interior is the place where the sun rises*, endowed with abundance, far-reaching . . .*[706]

House with the great me's of Kulaba . . . ,

(its) . . . has made the temple flourish,

Well grown fresh fruit, marvellous, filled with ripeness,

Descending from the midst of heaven . . .[707]

One sees that the temple stands at the cosmic "midst" or centre. From its interior shines the primeval sun, it houses the flourishing celestial garden.

The chamber of the great god, according to Sumerian creation myths, was that in which dwelt the original generation of "men" (*i.e.*, the company of gods to whom all races traced their ancestry and from which each race took its name). The chamber was the prototype of Eden, the ancestral birthplace.

In the Sumerian myth of the primordial hero Tagtug occurs a lively description of the god's chamber as a celestial garden. Occupying the house of abundance are the Anunnaki, the great god's companions. And here came into being the first generation of "Mankind":

The abundance of the goddess of flocks and of the Grain Goddess,

The Anunnaki in "the holy chamber"

Ate and were not filled . . .

The Anunnaki in "the holy chamber"

Drank and were not filled.

In the holy park, for their (the god's) benefit,

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702 Sjöberg and Bergmann, *op. cit.*, Temple Hymn 39.

703 Gragg, op. cit., 174.

704 *Ibid.*, Temple Hymn 25.

705 *Ibid.*, Temple Hymn 18.

706 *Ibid.*, Temple Hymn 15. [Emphasis added.]

707 *Ibid.*, Temple Hymn 21.

Mankind with the soul of life came into being.

Then Enki said to Enlil:

"Father Enlil, flocks and grain

In "the holy chamber" have been made plentiful.

In "the holy chamber" mightily shall they bring forth."

By the incantation of Enki and Enlil

Flocks and grain in "the holy chamber" brought forth.

Pasture they provided for them abundantly,

For the Grain-goddess they prepared a house . . .[708]

The flowering of the celestial garden is a widespread theme which I touched on briefly in the earlier discussion of the Egyptian creation and which I intend to explore at greater length in a subsequent volume. It is surely worthy of note, however, that the great god's "chamber" is the same as the "holy park" in which "Mankind" was brought forth.

If one reads the above lines in the light of the Egyptian symbolism—which equates the first generation of gods (men) with the "abundance" erupting from the creator—the Sumerian myth takes on greater meaning than might otherwise be evident. Immediately after the statement, "Mankind with the soul of life came into being," Enki declares that "flocks and grain in 'the holy chamber' have been made plentiful." *The primeval generation was the same thing as the overflowing abundance*, both referring to the luminous debris which erupted from the creator as "speech." Thus the "flocks and grain" of the celestial garden, according to the Sumerian text, are brought forth "by the *incantation* [*i.e.*, speech] of Enki and Enlil" (two competing figures of the single creator). To my knowledge, such close parallels between the Egyptian and Mesopotamian creation accounts have never received adequate attention by comparative mythologists.

The blossoming chamber of the Sumerian creation also finds a counterpart in a Hawaiian genesis myth, reproduced by Leinani Melville:

Man descended from the Sacred Shrine of

The King who created the heavens.

The Shrine of the King of Heaven who caused

that distant realm to bloom and flower:

The Consecrated Realm of Teave, the World of Teave.[709]

Both the Hawaiian and Sumerian sources place the genesis of the race in the great god's shrine or chamber, likened to a flowering garden. Just as the Sumerian chamber or temple corresponds to the "earth," so does the Hawaiian sacred shrine answer to "the World of Teave."

The Egyptian Temple

As in Mesopotamia, Egyptian sources portray the primeval temple as the visible dwelling of the sun-god:

May I shine like Re in his divine splendour in the temple.[710]

Homage to thee [Osiris Nu]*, O thou who art within the divine shrine, who shinest with rays of light and sendest forth radiance from thyself.*[711]

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708 Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 190-91.

709 Melville, *Children of the Rainbow*, 21.

710 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 638.

*. . . Every god shall . . . rejoice at the life of Ptah when he maketh his appearance from the great temple of the Aged One which is in Annu.*712

*Thou art the ruler of all the gods and thou hast joy of heart within the shrine.*713

The great god's shrine, house, or temple is the band of "glory," the Aten : "Your pavilion is enlarged in the interior of the Aten," states a *Coffin Text.*714

When the Egyptians laid the foundation of a temple, they consecrated the enclosed ground as "the primeval territory of the domain of the sun-god."715 Each temple became a miniature of the cosmic habitation founded in the creation. Thus the Egyptians viewed the Edfu temple as "the veritable descendant of the mythical temple that was created at the dawn of this world . . . ," Reymond tells us.716 The foundation ground became "the Blessed Territory from the time of the Primeval Ones . . . , the Hinterland of the Primeval Water."717 This was the Province of the Beginning, "the Blessed *Homeland.*"718

In Hebrew cosmology, reports Wensinck, "the sanctuary is the type and representation of Cosmos and Paradise and as such a power diametrically opposed to Chaos."719

From the very spot of the Hebrew temple "the first ray of light issued and illuminated the whole world." Indeed, the temple *was* the "whole world," according to a Midrash: "The temple corresponds to the whole world."720 Tradition states that the primordial light was "not identical with the light of the sun, moon and stars," but lit up the temple from its centre and radiated out through the windows.721 The cosmic temple, in other words, was the lost land of the "dawn" or first "sunrise."

Temple And Womb

Nothing is more basic to the imagery of the temple than its identity as the cosmic womb. Neumann observes: "Just as the temple is . . . a symbol of the Great Goddess as house and shelter, so the temple gate is the entrance into the goddess; it is her womb, and the innumerable entrance and threshold rites of mankind are expressions of this numinous feminine place."722 Throughout the Near East, states Allegro, "the temple was designed with a large measure of uniformity" and this sacred abode is "now recognizable as a microcosm of the womb."723

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711 *Ibid.*, 404.

712 *Ibid.*, 51.

713 *Ibid.*, 17.

714 Lacau, *Traduction des textes ses Cerueils du Moyen Empire*, 45.

715 Reymond, *The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple*, 311.

716 *Ibid.*, 311.

717 *Ibid.*, 311.

718 *Ibid.*, 305. [Emphasis added.]

719 "The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth," 15.

720 Patai, *Man and Temple*, 116.

721 *Ibid.*, 84-85.

722 *The Great Mother*, 159.

723 Allegro, *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*, 25.

Not in one land, but in every segment of the world, the sacred texts confirm this identity of temple and womb. The Egyptian great god resides within the womb of the goddess as in a "house" or "chamber." The goddess Hathor is "the house of Horus."[724] The name of Isis means "chamber," "house," "abode," etc., and the Egyptians claimed she was the house in which Horus came into being.[725] Nut is "the good house,"[726] and Neith the "house of Osiris,"[727] while the name of Nephthys means "Lady of the House."

The identity stands out in this hymn to Re: "I am exalted like the holy god who dwelleth in the Great Temple, and the gods rejoice when they see me in my beautiful coming forth from the body [*khat*, "womb"] of Nut, when my mother Nut giveth birth to me."[728] To shine as the "sun" within the cosmic temple is to come forth within the womb of Nut, "the good house."

Among the Egyptians, notes Sethe, "house" served as a poetic expression for the womb.[729] Clearly, this "poetic expression" originated as a radical identity in the ritual. Just as the goddess' titles denominate her the "house" or "temple" of the great god, so does the temple receive the character of the goddess. Ptah's temple at Memphis is the "mistress of life,"[730] and an inscription in King Seti I's funerary temple states, "I am thy temple, thy mother, forever and forever."[731] The Holy Chamber from which Re shines forth is, according to Piankoff, "The Holy Chamber of the Netherworld [Tuat], the womb of divine birth."[732]

Throughout Mesopotamia, one discovers the same features of the temple. Here, too, the cosmic "house" appears as the womb of primeval genesis. Urukug is "the shrine which causes the seed to come forth,"[733] while the temple of Aruru is "the procreative womb of Emah"[734] and the temple of Lilzag "the house of exalted seed."[735]

The Mesopotamian temple or chamber thus gives birth to the god. Tammuz, the man-child, is "the offspring of the house"[736] and Marduk the "Child of the holy chamber."[737] In the Babylonian creation epic we read:

In the chamber of fate, the abode of destinies,

A god was engendered, most able and wisest of gods.

In the heart of the Apsu was Marduk created.[738]

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724 Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth*, 25.

725 Budge, *Osiris: the Egyptian Religion of Resurrection*, Vol.II, 272.

726 Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol. I, 462.

727 Levy, *Religious Conceptions of the Stone Age*, 117.

728 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 260.

729 Cited in Bleeker, *op. cit.*, 25.

730 Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 5.

731 Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 67.

732 *The Litany of Re*, 25n.

733 Sjöberg and Bergmann, *op. cit.*, 32.

734 Langdon, *Sumerian Liturgical Texts*, 115.

735 *Ibid.*, 141.

736 Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 347.

737 *Ibid.*, 155.

"You have taken my seed into the womb, have given birth to me in the shrine," declares King Gudea to the goddess Gatumdug.739 One can compare the Sumerian text: "In the great house he has begotten me."740 As in Egypt, the gate of a sanctuary is conceived as the entrance to the womb of the goddess.741 Hence, Sargon styles one of the gates of his palace *Belit ilani*, "mistress of the gods."742

The Crown

Among all ancient races the crown, wreath, or headband signified religious and political authority. Yet this world-wide function of the crown reflects no self-evident fact of human nature or of the external world. What was the source of the crown's numinous powers?

The symbols of kingship have their origin in the Universal Monarch, the ancestor of kings and "founder" of the kingship ritual. Legends of the great god say that, when he established his kingdom, he wore as a crown his "circle of glory" (halo, aura). Before Egyptian rulers ever donned the White Crown, the crown of the great father Osiris shed its light at the cosmic centre: "His crown clove the sky and consorted with the stars."743 The primordial sun, reports Pliny, "established civilization and first triumphantly crowned heaven with his glowing circle."744 In the ritual of the Mandaeans it was the "First Man" who wore as a crown the "circle of radiance, light and glory."745 One could hardly make a greater mistake than to assume, with so many modern scholars, that the crowns worn by gods are simply projections onto the heaven order of the crowns worn by terrestrial kings. Divorced from the crown of the Universal Monarch, the headdress of the local king becomes a meaningless artifact. Whatever powers the crown may possess, they derive from the cosmic prototype.

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738 *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 62.

739 Kramer, *The Sacred Marriage Rite*, 28.

740 Langdon, *A Sumerian Grammar*, 253.

741 Levy, *op. cit.*, 100.

742 Jastrow, *op. cit.*, 327. Of the goddess Belit-ekalla, "Belit of the palace," Jastrow writes: "it must be confessed that the precise force of the qualification of 'Belit of the palace' escapes us." *Ibid.*, 227. To one aware of the root meaning of the god's "house" the title can hardly pose a mystery.

The identity of "womb" and "house" occurs in every section of the globe. Simplicus reports that the Syrian goddess Derceto or Atargatis was the habitation of the gods, just as Orphic doctrine styled Vesta the house of the gods. Faber, *The Origins of Pagan Idolatry*, III, 49. The Hindu *Rig Veda* states: "They conduct him to the hut of the consecrated; the hut of the consecrated." Keith, *Rigveda Brahmanas*, 108. The same meaning of the sacred house prevails in China, according to Hentze, *Das Haus als Weltort der Seele*, 73.

The Mayans knew the goddess Ix Ahau Na, rendered by Roys as "Palace Lady"—an appellation exactly equivalent to the Babylonian "Belit of the Palace" and the Egyptian "Lady of the House" (Nephthys). In the Mayan language Na means both "mother" and "house." See J. Eric and S. Thompson, *Maya History and Religion*, 245.

With this understanding of the cosmic temple, one can better appreciate the sacred marriage rites so often conducted in sacred chambers. The king or high priest signified the god, while the queen or priestess represented the goddess and thus the temple itself, the cosmic receptacle housing the seed of abundance. Symbolically the temple was the spouse of the king, and the kings union with the temple maiden reenacted the primal marriage.

" . . . It is from the temple," states Patai, "that the blessings of fertility issued forth the whole world . . . The temples of many an ancient people were regarded as the Nuptial Chamber in which the divine powers of fertility, the Father God and Mother Goddess, celebrated their great annual wedding feast for the purpose of ensuring the fruitfulness of the earth and the multiplication of man and beast." Patai, *op. cit.*, 88.

743 Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, 103.

744 Quoted in Brown, *Researches into the Origins of the Primitive Constellation*, Vol. I, 32.

745 Drower, *The Coronation of the Great Šišlam*, 13.

Fundamentally, the crown is an *enclosing band.* The most important component of the Egyptian crown was the gold headband, while the great god was "Master of the Head-Band."[746] The Sumerian word for crown, *uku*, means "great band."[747] In the classical etymologies reviewed by Onians the "crown" possesses the concrete meaning of a "circle" or "band" enclosing a god or a man.[748]

When the Egyptian priests placed the sacred band on the head of the king, deeming him the regent of the sun-god Re, they were guided by the image of the great god himself, whose hieroglyphic was , showing the sun-god in the circle of the Aten. Thus, in the Theban ritual, the gods Horus and Set say to the new king, "I will give thee a life like unto that of Re, years even as the years of Tem," and "I will establish the crown upon thy head *even like the Aten on the head of Amen-Re.*"[749]

The great god not only *wears* the crown of glory, *he dwells in it.* He "appears in the White Crown"[750] or "comes forth from the Very Great Crown."[751] In the *Book of the Dead* one finds "the divine being who dwelleth in the nemmes crown."[752]

More specifically, the god's crown is his *spouse*—the womb-goddess who emanated from the god, yet gave birth to him.

O Red crown, O Inu [the crown],

O Great One . . .

O Inu, thou hast come forth from me;

And I have come forth from thee.[753]

To wear the crown is to reside within the womb; or conversely, to be born in the womb is to wear the crown.[754] It is in this sense that one must understand the statement of the *Coffin Texts* that the god is "born" in the crown or that the king is "the son of the white crown."[755] The same identification of crown and womb explains the statement that Osiris first shone forth "fully crowned from his mothers womb."[756] Does not the sign depict the "fully crowned" god within the cosmic womb?

"I am he who is girt about with his girdle and who cometh forth from the goddess of the Ureret crown."[757] This statement from the *Book of the Dead* concurs with numerous other references in Egyptian texts, equating the crown with the mother goddess. In the *Pyramid Texts* we read: "I know my mother, I have not forgotten my

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746 Muller, *Egyptian Mythology*, 129.

747 Langdon, *Sumerian Grammar*, 21.

748 *The Origins of European Thought*, 445, 450-460.

749 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 344. [Emphasis added.]

750 Piankoff, *The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 117.

751 Piankoff, *The Wandering of the Soul*, 22.

752 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 253.

753 Quoted in Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 108.

754 Lacau, *op. cit.*, 22.

755 Budge, *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 248.

756 Clark, *op. cit.*, 177.

757 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 345.

mother, the white crown."[758] The same texts say of the king: "thy mother is the Great Wild Cow, living in Nekeb, the white crown, the Royal Headdress."[759] Accordingly, the Egyptians esteemed the goddess Isis as "the Crown of Re-Horus"[760] and the goddess Tefnut as the "diadem of Re."[761]

The identity of goddess and crown, has, in fact, been fully acknowledged by Clark and Frankfort, among others.[762] Yet Frankfort's explanation amounts to this: "The goddess is simply the personification of the power of royalty . . . and hence is immanent in the crown."[763] The statement tacitly assumes that the local crown came first (who knows why) and that the great goddess, personifying an abstract "power of royalty," came to be identified with the crown *simply because the crown was a symbol of royal power.*

But the relationship of the crown and womb amounts to a radical identity; both take their character from the same visible band. Ignored by Frankfort is the explicit equation of *both the goddess and the crown* with the circle of the Aten.

That the god dwells in the crown means that the crown is the god's house or temple—what the Egyptians called "the temple of the White Crown." Speaking of the headgear of Sumer and Egypt, Levy notes that "in each case it bears a relation to the monuments. It [the crown] may, in fact, be considered as itself a little sanctuary."[764] But what was the source of this unexpected identity? Sumerian temple hymns repeatedly invoke the *cosmic* temple as the great god's crown. The temple of Eqaduda is the "Crown of the high plain"[765] and Sippar the "Sanctuary of heaven, star of heaven, *crown*, borne by Ningal."[766] The Kes temple becomes the "Great, true temple, reaching the sky, temple, *great crown*, reaching the sky . . ."[767]

The same identity prevails elsewhere. Hentze, observing that the Mexican Quetzalcoatl wears his temple as a crown, reports that such symbolism pervades early Chinese bronzes. One notes also the "world house" worn as a crown by the famous Diana of Ephesus. Like the sacred abode of all great gods the latter crown-temple has four doors facing in four directions.[768]

Since the cosmic temple is the same thing as the cosmic city, one should not be surprised to find that the city also appears as the crown. In the *Book of the Dead* occurs a description of "Re when at the beginning he rose in the city of Suten-henen [Heracleopolis], crowned like a king in his rising."[769] The evidence suggests that the city (or kingdom) in which Re first shone forth was the very circle of glory which he wore as a crown—and

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758 *Pyramid Text* 910.

759 *Pyramid Text* 729, quoted in Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 174.

760 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 213.

761 Hassan, *Hymnes Religieux du Moyen Empire*, 46.

762 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 107, 174; Clark, *op. cit.*, 219.

763 *Op. cit.*, 107.

764 *Op. cit.*, 176.

765 Sjöberg and Bergmann, *op. cit.*, 21.

766 *Ibid.*, 45. [Emphasis added.]

767 Gragg, *op. cit.*, 169. [Emphasis added.]

768 Hentze, *op. cit.*, 96.

769 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 93.

this is why, in the symbols and , the Egyptians combined the *hetch*-crown and *tesher*-crown with the symbol of the goddess Nut , the "city" or "holy land." In accord with this identity the Babylonian hymn proclaims, "Borsippa [the cosmic city] is thy crown."770

Often the crown takes the form of a city wall. The most famous example, perhaps, is the crown of Tyche of Antioch, which corresponds to the turreted wall of the city.771 Concerning the goddess of the city-crown, Suhr writes: ". . . the whole city wall, in a diminutive version, was placed on her head, beginning with Astarte and continuing with Aphrodite of Greek and Roman times."772 Yet why the crown was assimilated to the city wall remains unexplained by modern researchers—and will continue to remain a puzzle until scholars acknowledge the concrete form of the mother goddess, city, and crown as a single band of light around the great god.

The Vase

Mythmaking imagination also expressed the Saturnian band as a vase or receptacle housing the sun-god and his waters of life: all the waters of the world, according to ancient belief, originated in the solitary god.

As a symbol of the all-containing receptacle above, the round vessel became a popular figure of the mother goddess. ". . . The great goddess as divine water jar is the mistress of the upper waters." observes Neumann.773

G. Elliot Smith notices the close connection of the mother goddess with the vase: "The idea of the Mother Pot is found not only in Babylonia, Egypt, India, and the Eastern Mediterranean, but wherever the influence of these ancient civilizations made itself felt. It is widespread among the Celtic-speaking peoples . . . It became also a witch's cauldron, the magic cup, the Holy Grail, the font in which a child is reborn in the faith, the vessel of water here being interpreted in the earliest sense as the uterus or the organ of birth."774

Figure 29. The goddess Nut as the revolving water container.

The vase, in the Egyptian hieroglyphs, denotes the celestial goddess Nut and the female principle in general.775 An interesting Egyptian illustration depicts Nut, bearing the cosmic vessel on her head, and spinning around with sufficient speed to cause drops of water to fly outward (see fig. 29).

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770 Sayce, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, 81.

771 Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 19-23.

772 *The Spinning Aphrodite*, 146.

773 *Op. cit.*, 127.

774 *The Evolution of the Dragon*, 181.

775 Neumann, *op. cit.*, 128.

The mother goddess is the revolving water container in heaven. Sumero-Babylonian cylinder seals show the purifying waters of the Apsu descending from a vase, regarded as the mother womb. The vase is in "the heaven of Anu," called "the place of the flowing forth of the waters which open the womb."[776]

The same symbolism of the vase prevails in China, according to Hentze (who relates the symbolism of the feminine container to a global tradition).[777] The Zuni address the sacred pot as "the Mother,"[778] while a Peruvian jar covered with breasts on all sides obviously expresses the identical theme.[779]

Thus does the sun-god *dwell in the vase*, renewing his birth each "day": "I have come forth from my djenit-jar, and I will appear in the morning," reads an Egyptian *Pyramid Text.*[780] (I remind the reader that archaic "day" means our "night.") To the same symbolism belongs the Hindu Vasishtha who is "born from the jar"[781] and is obviously akin to the Iranian Fravashi Khumbya, "the son of the jar."[782] Muslim tradition echoes this theme in declaring that the soul of Mohammed preexisted in a vase of light in the world of spirits.[783] The Chinese alchemist Wei Po-Yang says: "The True Man living in a deep abyss, floats about the centre of the round vessel."[784] The mother vase housing the manchild appears even in Mexico (fig. 31).[785]

Among the Mayans, writes Nuttall, the vase symbolized "the divine essence of light and life proceeding from 'the Heart of Heaven.'"[786] Appropriately they designated the symbolic vase as the "navel or centre,"[787] a characterization which agrees with Neumann's interpretation of the vase as the "centre from which the universe is nourished."[788]

The vase denotes, in other words, the celestial earth, the original land of abundance. While the Egyptian priests of Ptah claimed the primeval land to have been fashioned by Ptah on his potter's wheel, the hymns also extol "the *pottery* which Ptah moulded"[789] in clear reference to the same primordial enclosure: the subject is the realm of the ancestors, where the resurrected dead receive "the fresh water in a *jar* which Ptah has fashioned."[790]

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776 Albright, *The Mouth of the Rivers*, 173.

777 *Op. cit.*

778 Nuttall, *Fundamental Principles of Old and New World Civilization*, 105.

779 Neumann, *op. cit.*, 124.

780 *Pyramid Text* 437.

781 Agrawala, *Sparks from the Vedic Fire*, 21.

782 Darmesteter, *The Zend Avesta*, Part II, 225.

783 O'Niell, *The Night of the Gods*, 923.

784 Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 348.

785 Nuttall, *op. cit.*, 100.

786 *Ibid.*, 284.

787 *Ibid.*, 96.

788 *Op. cit.*, 132.

789 M. S. Holmberg, *The God Ptah*, 46. [Emphasis added.]

790 *Ibid.*, 46. [Emphasis added.]

Figure 30. The mother goddess as water container. Vase from Troy, fourth stratum.

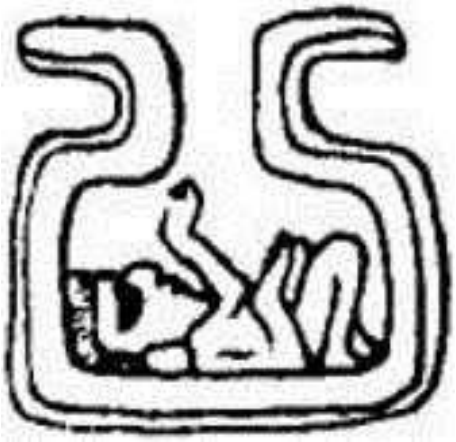

Figure 31. Man-child in vase. From Mexico, Vienna Codex.

Here is the declaration of "the potter" in the *Pyramid Texts* (as translated by Faulkner): "I am your potter upon earth . . . I have come and have brought to you this mansion of yours which I built for you on that night when you were born, on the day of your birth-place; it is a beer-jar (sic!)."791 Most instructive is Faulkner's parenthetical "sic!" following the phrase "beer-jar"—as if to suggest that the scribe suffered a lapse of reason: what could a beer jar have to do with the great god's "mansion" and "birthplace"? Among the Egyptians beer symbolized fertility and abundance flowing from on high. The ritual "beer-jar" was the primeval land—the dwelling which congealed around the great father and (as the cosmic womb) "gave birth" to him. The same texts in which the above lines appear locate the potter god in "this Island of Earth." Vessel, temple, earth, and womb denote the same celestial enclosure.

The Eye

One of the most mysterious symbols which have come down to us is the solitary and all-seeing Eye. In ancient Egypt, where the most complete information is available, the symbol pervades the monuments and the sacred texts of all periods. "The Eye is the key to the religion," states Clark.792 Yet no archaic sign has been less

791 *Pyramid Texts* 1184-85. In Numerous ancient rites reviewed by Hentze—from China to Mexico to Italy—the deceased, or their ashes, were placed in vases which possessed the shape of a house; and these "house-urns," in each cult, symbolized the "Earth-Mother." Artists in China and Peru depicted the house-urn containing an unborn child. The vase sheltered the deceeased as the womb, giving birth (that is, rebirth) to him in the land of beginnings. Neumann describes similar symbolism of the house-urn in the Aegean cults of the Bronze Age, where the dead man lies in the vessel "as a child in the attitude of an embryo." The practice of enclosing the dead within house-like vases symbolizing the mother-womb does not explain itself. The union of womb, house, and vessel hearkens back to the primordial order and the original dwelling of the great father. See Hentze, *op. cit.*; Neumann, *op. cit.*, 163.

792 *Op. cit.*, 227.

understood than the mystic Eye: "The Eye is the commonest symbol in Egyptian thought and the strangest to us."[793]

Is the Eye, as almost uniformly asserted, the solar orb? Nowhere is the weakness of solar mythology more apparent than in its handling of this puzzling symbol. One Egyptologist after another, by following the solar interpretation, passes over in silence the many enigmatic particulars of eye symbolism.

To my knowledge the only well-known authority to reject categorically the solar interpretation is Rudolph Anthes. After devoting extensive research to the Eye of Re, Anthes concludes that the Eye "apparently *never* was the sun."[794] Yet Anthes, seeking an answer in the heavens as they appear to us today, does not begin to unravel the interconnected symbolism of the Eye.

Strictly speaking the Egyptian Eye is neither a "sun" nor a "star," but the *circle* or *enclosure* fashioned by the creator as his celestial home. The great god *resides* in the Eye as the pupil. One of the most common names of the Eye in Egypt is *Utchat*, hieroglyphically rendered as . The Utchat hieroglyph combines three closely related signs:

1) , meaning "to see" and also "to form, fashion, create";

2) , "to fashion, encircle"; and

3) , "cord, to bind, to encircle."

The all-seeing Eye is the *created enclosure*, the bond around the primeval sun.

Thus the god has his home in the Utchat (Eye): "I am in the Utchat."[795] "I am he who dwelleth in the Utchat."[796] "Enter thou in peace [*em hetep*, "at rest"] into the divine Utchat."[797]

A *Coffin Text* reads, "I am Horus in his Eye,"[798] while the *Harris Magical Papyrus* states, "I am Shu under the form of Re, seated in the middle of his father's eye."[799] In the *Book of the Dead* one finds: "I am the pure one in his eye";[800] "I am he who dwelleth in the middle of his own Eye."[801]

Thus does the great god reside in the enclosure of the Eye as the "pupil." "Praise be to thee, O Ra, Exalted Sekhem, aged one of the pupil of the Utchat [Eye]."[802] "I am in the Utchat . . . I sit in [*em*, "as"] the pupil of the eye . . . ";[803] "God-the-pupil-of-whose-eye-is-terrible is thy name . . ."

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793 *Ibid.*, 218.

794 Rudolf Anthes, *Mythology in Ancient Egypt*, in Kramer, *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, 87-90. [Emphasis added.]

795 Lacau, *op. cit.*, 177.

796 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 178.

797 *Ibid.*, 638.

798 Lacau, *op. cit.*, 65.

799 Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, 103.

800 Budge, *Papyrus of Ani*, 219.

801 Renouf, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 164.

802 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 344.

803 Budge, *Papyrus of Ani*, 219.

When the texts speak of "the Eye of 'Re who is in his Aten,"804 one recognizes that the Eye *is* the Aten, for the Egyptians treated the Eye sign and the Aten sign as interchangeable symbols. Just as the Aten constituted the protective enclosure, so did the Eye: "O Osiris Nu, the Eye of Horus protecteth thee, it keepeth thee in safety . . ."805 ". . . He is Horus encircled with the protection of his Eye . . ."806 "My refuge is my Eye, my protection is my Eye . . ."807 "I am the dweller in the Eye; no evil or calamitous things befall me."808

Such references surely indicate that the Eye is not the sun or the sun-god, but the *goddess*, in whose protective womb the sun-god dwells. As a matter of fact, though Egyptian ritual presents the goddess under many names, *all primary figures of the goddess receive the appellation "Eye of Re."* This includes, among others, Isis, Hathor, Nut, Sekhet, Iusaaset, Mehurt, Bast, Tefnut—and of course, the *goddess* Utchat ("Eye").809

"The complex meshes of eye symbolism," states Clark, "are woven all around the Egyptian Goddess and she cannot be understood or compared with other goddesses until they are unravelled."810 Yet, while Clark notes several interesting associations of the Eye and goddess he fails to discern the Eye's *root character*, as the protective enclosure.

Only the direct identity of the Eye and cosmic womb will explain its context in the ritual: "The child who is in the eye of Horus, hath been presented to thee . . ."811 "I am he whose being has been moulded in his eye."812 Horus is said to ". . . rear and nourish the multitudes through that Unique Eye, *Mistress of the Divine Company* and Lady of the Universe [All, Cosmos]."813

The very goddesses whom the texts depict as the Eye of the primeval sun are also called the "house," as we should expect. As to the identity of the Eye and the temple, Egyptian sources leave no room for debate (though I know of no Egyptologist to observe the connection). The temple of Karnak is "the healthy eye of the Lord of All,"814 a striking parallel to the Sumerian temple as the "House, eye of the land."815

In the *Book of the Pylons* Re hearkens back to the remote age when "I was in the temple of my eye,"816 while the *Book of the Dead* speaks of the son of Osiris residing "within the temple of his Eye in Annu."817 Elsewhere one finds the primeval sun coming forth "in the sanctuary of my eye."818

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804 Vandier, "Iousâas et (Hathor)-Nébet-Hétépet," 31, 83.

805 Budge, *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 415.

806 *Pyramid Text* 195.

807 *Pyramid Text* 320.

808 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 97.

809 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 354, 422, 430, 443, 447, 517; Vol. II, 213, 279.

810 *Op. cit.*, 227.

811 Budge, *The Litany of Funerary Offerings*, 135.

812 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* 178.

813 Clark, *op. cit.*, 150. [Emphasis added.] That the Eye, though female, belongs to the great father (as the "Eye of Horus," "Eye of Ra," or "Eye of Nu") agrees fundamentally with the character of the enclosed sun (here) already examined. The sun and its enclosure constitute the primordial Androgyne or "Father-Mother." A common idea underlies the mythical recollections of "birth" from the great gods navel, thigh, or eye; the imagery focuses on the simple and universal form of the primal parents: (here).

814 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 152.

815 Sjöberg and Bergmann, *op. cit.*, 41.

816 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 186.

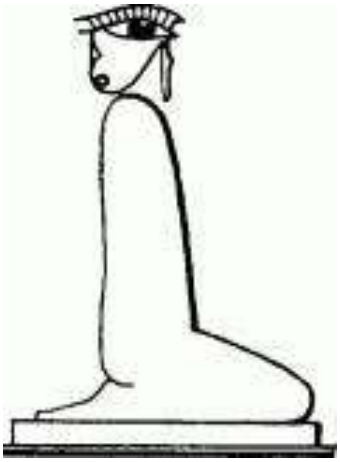

Figure 32. The eye of the resting god.

Of course no one who automatically thinks "sun" when reading "eye" is likely to reflect on the overlapping symbols of the eye as a *band* or *enclosure.* Nor can one so trained meaningfully explain why, throughout Egyptian ritual, the eye appears in conjunction with the *crown.* In the Egyptian mystery play, the king is commanded, "take thou thine eye, whole to thy face," and the command is carried out by placing the *crown* upon the king—for the crown, as "the symbol and seat of royal power . . . is called the eye of Horus."819

The *Pyramid Texts* say, "Horus has given you his eye that you may take possession of the Urert-Crown."820 "O king, stand up, don the eye of Horus . . . that you may go forth in it, that the gods may see you clad in it."821 As to the identity of Eye and crown one could not ask for more explicit statements than these: "I wear the white crown, the eye of Horus."822 "O Osiris the king, I make firm the eye of Horus on your head—a headband."823 "I give you the crown of Upper Egypt, the eye which went up from your head."824 (The circle of glory issued from the central sun.)

If the god wears the Eye as a crown, so also does he take the Eye as a throne, and this relationship of the Eye and throne helps to explain the hieroglyph for Osiris, in which the two symbols appear together— . But to conventional schools the combination makes little sense. In Budge's opinion, for example, there is no clear basis for the assimilation of the two signs, and "the difficulty is hardly likely to be cleared up."825

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817 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 209.

818 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 166.

819 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 127.

820 *Pyramid Text* 635.

821 *Pyramid Texts* 844-45.

822 *Pyramid Text* 1234.

823 *Pyramid Text* 2274.

824 *Pyramid Text* 1816.

825 *Gods*, Vol. II, 113-14.

Yet to anyone aware of the interrelated images of the Aten , the Osiris hieroglyph will pose no mystery. The throne is the symbol of Isis (*i.e.*, Isis *is* the throne), but the same goddess appears as "the eye"—so that Osiris sits *enthroned* within the circle of the Eye. Indeed, the Egyptian language says as much when it terms the throne *ast utchat*—"the throne of the Eye." And the *Book of the Dead* brings the Eye and throne into connection with the crown and egg: "I am the lord of the crown. I am in the Eye, my egg . . . My seat is on my throne. I sit in [*em*, "as"] the pupil of the eye."826

Though the influence of the Eye was felt far beyond Egypt, it is the integrated Egyptian imagery that throws light on later developments of the symbol. While the texts sometimes speak of "two eyes" (see the section The Two Eyes), fundamentally there is only one Eye of the great god. "I am Re who wept for himself in his single eye,"827 state the *Coffin Texts*. The single Eye of Re or Horus is paralleled by the "clear-seeing eye" of the Sumerian Enki,828 the single eyes of the Norse Odin,829 the Iranian Ahura Mazda,830 and the Mexican Tlaloc,831 the "ageless eye of all-seeing Zeus,"832 and the "one-eye of heaven" belonging to the Japanese Ama no Ma-hitotsu.833

The Egyptian Eye of Horus, in the *Book of the Dead*, is that which "shineth with splendours on the forehead of Re."834 One can easily understand how subsequent generations, possessing only *conceptions* rather than *perceptions* to guide them, gave the great god increasingly human form, translating the central Eye into the legendary "third eye," which in Hindu representations appears as little more than a decorative jewel. The single eye of the Cyclops belongs to the same class of images. If the eye is not centered on the forehead, it may be located on the breast, as in the case of the Hindu demon Kabandha, slain by Rama,835 and the headless man encountered by Fionn, Oisin, and Caoilte in Celtic myth.836 (The pupil of the Eye is the Heart of Heaven.)

Surely one cannot properly evaluate the fanciful one-eyed giants of the classical and medieval age without first taking into account the celestial Eye—which left a mighty imprint on the earliest ritual.837

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826 Budge, *Papyrus of Ani*, 96.

827 Clark, *op. cit.*, 95.

828 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 464.

829 MacCulloch, *Celtic Mythology*, 50.

830 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 464.

831 *Ibid.*, 464.

832 Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, Vol. I, 186.

833 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 464.

834 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 56.

835 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 464.

836 MacCulloch, *op. cit.*, 169.

837 As an example of contemporary analyses I note the explanation of the Cyclopes offered by Robert Graves: "The Cyclopes seem to have been a guild of Early Helladic bronzesmiths. Cyclops means 'ring-eyed,' and they are likely to have been tatoed with concentric rings on the forehead, in honour of the sun . . . Concentric circles are part of the mystery of smith-craft: in order to beat out bowls, helmets, or ritual masks, the smith would guide himself with such circles, described by compass around the centre of the flat disk on which he was working. The Cyclopes were one-eyed also in the sense that smiths often shade one eye with a patch against

The Cyclops, or "wheel-eyed" giant, corresponds in many ways to the god Odin, of Norse mythology. Odin's all-piercing eye is also "a giant wheel."838 In ancient cosmology nothing is more explicit than such imagery of the *enclosed* sun. If the experts have failed to unravel the mystery of the Eye or Eye-wheel , the failure is not due to a lack of evidence but to the *habit* of the researchers, who, from the start, excluded the enclosure from the mythological investigation.

The Circular Serpent

Figure 33. Saturn as Mithraic Zurvan (Time), with central eye. (Pupil of eye=heart of heaven.)

It would be quite impossible, within the limited space permitted here, to review all the interconnections unifying the imagery of the Saturnian band. For every instance previously cited, many others have been left out simply to avoid excessive monotony.

As a final example of overlapping imagery, I shall cite the case of the circular serpent. All of the Saturnian gods—Atum-Re, An, Yama, Huang-ti, Quetzalcoatl, Kronos—reside within the fold of a serpent (dragon, fish, crocodile, etc.). But this symbol cannot be evaluated in isolation from the celestial earths, eggs, wheels, temples, crowns, and eyes which fill the ancient lexicon.

In the general mystic tradition, reports Cirlot, "the dragon, the serpent or the fish biting its tail, is a representative of time."839 Father Time, of course, is Saturn. Thus the Greeks placed in the hands of Chronos a snake which formed a ring by holding its tail in its mouth,840 and this circular serpent is clearly that which the Hindus called Kali ("Time"). The Zoroastrians represented Zurvan ("Time") by an enclosing serpent. A serpent encircles a Nahuatl calendar wheel (wheel of time) published by Clavigero.841 On the famous Mexican calendar stone twin serpents form a single enclosure around the stone.842

The Egyptians associated the circular serpent with Atum (god of Time), identifying the serpent with the cosmic waters erupting from the creator: "I am the outflow of the Primeval Flood, he who emerged from the waters," the serpent announces.843

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flying sparks." Graves, *The Greek Myths*, 32. In one paragraph Graves offers three different—and equally unsatisfactory—explanations of the "ring-eyed" god.

838 Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, Vol. I, 703.

839 *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 48.

840 Faber, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 194.

841 Nuttall, *op. cit.*, 26.

842 *Ibid.*, 26.

843 Clark, *op. cit.*, 50.

The water serpent, issuing from Atum, constituted an aspect of the creator, eventually forming a coil around "himself":

I bent right around, I was encircled in my coils,

One who made a place for himself in the midst of his coils.

*His utterance was what came forth from his mouth.*844

Why the reference to the "utterance" of the god in association with the appearance of the serpent-coil? The reason is that the serpent, embodying the "outflow" of erupting waters, was himself a manifestation of the creator's speech.

In the *Coffin Text*, the great god, or Master of the All (Cosmos), recalls the original age "while I was still in the midst of the serpent coil."845 And the king hopes to attain this very enclosure: "The King lies down in your coil, the King sits in your circle" proclaims a *Pyramid Text.*846

Can this serpent be anything other than the band of the enclosed sun ⊙? The sun-god Re, while deemed *ami khet*, "dweller in the fiery circle," is also *ami-hem-f*, "dweller in his fiery serpent." Do not the circle and the serpent mean the same thing? The hieroglyphs offer conclusive evidence. Though the common pictograph of Re is ⊙, the Egyptians also denoted Re by the glyph , showing the serpent as the *band around the primeval sun.*

This direct identification of the serpent and the circle of the Aten enables us to test the coherence of Aten symbolism as a whole. For if the serpent denoted the band of the enclosed sun ⊙ one should find:

1. That the serpent was the circle of the mother goddess and defined the limits of the All (*i.e.*, the cord, egg, shield, or belt of Saturn's Cosmos).

2. That the serpent enclosed the world-wheel, city, throne, earth-navel and celestial ocean.

3. That the same serpent formed the wall of the cosmic temple, encircled the god-king as a crown, enclosed the celestial waters as a vase, and defined the circle of the all-seeing Eye.

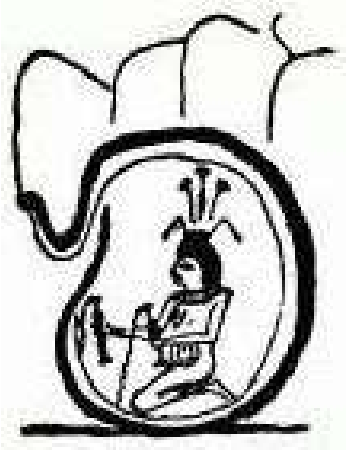

Figure 34. (a) Egyptian and

844 *Ibid.*, 51.

845 *Ibid.*, 51.

846 *Pyramid Text* 2289.

Figure 34. (b) Mayan versions of the circular serpent as water container.

Throughout all of ancient Egypt the circular serpent was the symbol of the great mother. In the hieroglyphs, the Uraeus serpent, often used in conjunction with an egg, means "goddess." "The goddess Uatchet cometh unto thee in the form of the living Uraeus, to anoint thy head . . . ," reads the *Book of the Dead.*847 A Karnak temple inscription states that the goddess Mut, in the form of a serpent, encircled "her father Re and gave birth to him as Khonsu."848

In the same way the Babylonians knew the great goddess as "the mother python of heaven."849 The Cosmos, according to Jeremias, was represented as the womb of the "shining Tiamat," the enclosing serpent or dragon of the primeval sea.850 So also did the Hindus, Cretans, Celts, Greeks, Romans, and Mexicans represent the mother goddess as a serpent or dragon.851

It is the same thing to say that the circular serpent enclosed Saturn's Cosmos. In the Egyptian language the "coil" formed by the serpent is literally "the cord" or "the band," indicated by the hieroglyphs and . The serpent itself was the *rope* which the creator stretched round about, gathering the primeval waters or primeval matter into an organized enclosure.

Figure 35. Circular dragon in Haropollo, *Selecta hieroglyphica* (1597).

847 Quoted in Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 443.

848 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 180.

849 Albright, "The Goddess of Life and Wisdom," 273.

850 *Handbuch der Altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, 21; R. C. Thompson, *The reports of the Magicians and Astrologers of Nineveh and Babylon*, Vol. II, 249.

851 Collum, "Die Schöpferische Mutter Göttin," 249, 274; Neumann, *op. cit.*, 18, 153; Faber, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 456; Burland, *The Gods of Mexico*, 133.

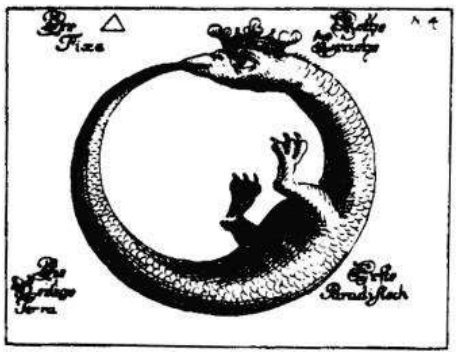

Figure 36. The alchemist circular dragon.

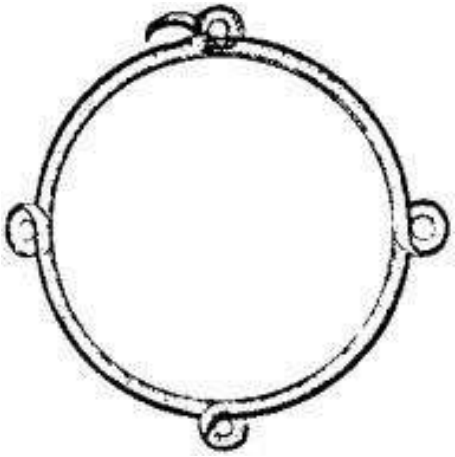

Figure 37. Mexican circular serpent biting its tail.

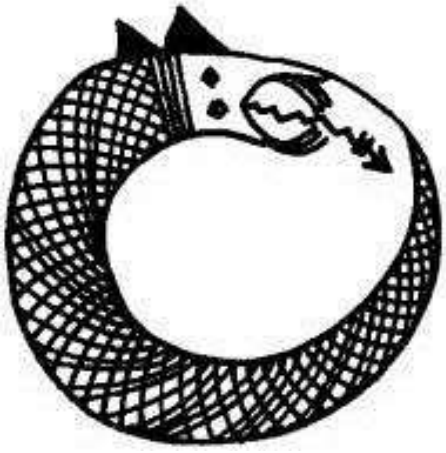

Figure 38. Circular serpent motif on the interior of a food basin from Sikyatki in the South-Western United States.

Figure 39 (a) [& b**]** Two Chinese versions of the circular dragon.

Figure 39b. The dragon encloses the central sun.

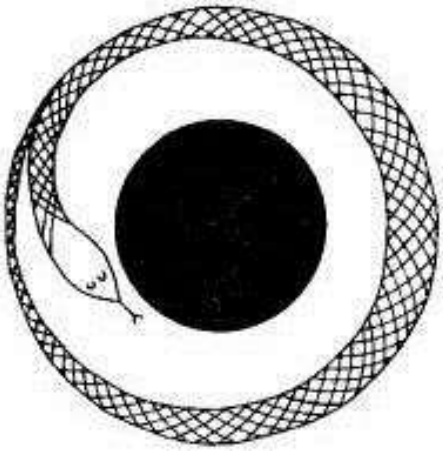

Figure 40. Hindu circular serpent, enclosing the *bindu*, or central sun.

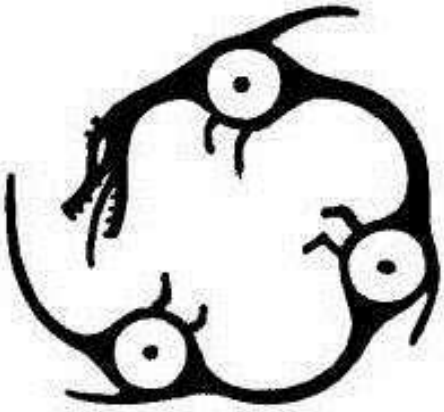

Figure 41. Alaska circular serpent, indicating close relationship to enclosed sun.

In Sumero-Babylonian imagery, too, a circular serpent—called "the *rope* of the great god"852—encloses the original Cosmos. The serpent-rope is "the bond of the All" held by Enki or Ninurta (Saturn).

But the cord is synonymous with the cosmic egg and girdle, and this conjunction of Saturnian symbols makes particularly interesting the statement of the Greek philosopher Epicurus to Epiphanius: ". . . the All was from the beginning like an *egg*, and the *pneuma* [World Soul] in *serpent* wise around the egg was then a *tight band as a wreath or belt around the universe.*"853 The Orphics called this serpent Chronos, describing it as the *bond*

852 Sayce, *op. cit.*, 116. [Emphasis added.]

853 Quoted in Onians, *op. cit.*, 250. [Emphasis added.]

(peirata) of the Cosmos. The serpent-bond "lies around the Cosmos," proclaimed the Pythagoreans.854 It was thus an ancient custom to display images of the cosmic egg encircled by a vast serpent.

All the evidence in the foregoing sections indicates that this circle of the Cosmos was the "earth" or "place" fashioned in the creation. Hence, the serpent who circumscribes the organized All is the same serpent whom the ancients depicted encircling the created "world."

In the Gnostic work *Pistis Sophia*, Our Lord states, "The outer darkness is a great serpent, the tail of which is in its mouth, and it is outside the whole world."855 As shown by Budge, the idea had its roots in Egypt, where the world-encircling serpent was Apepi, "a serpent with his tail in his mouth."856 Horapollo reports that when the Egyptians wished to depict the "world," they painted a serpent.857

The Babylonian *Esharra*, the circle of created "earth," is identified as the primordial beast Tiamat,858 the world-enclosing serpent-dragon which the Hebrews called Tehom and the Muslims the "Mysterious Serpent."859 To the Hindus it was the fabulous serpent Naga that enclosed the world in its folds. Scandinavian myth knew the serpent Midgard, the *Weltumspanner*, or "Stretcher-round-the-World."860

All ancient cosmologies which speak of a world-encircling serpent say that its body formed the river or ocean shielding the organized earth from Chaos. The serpent, dragon, or crocodile, in the Egyptian system, thus denotes the celestial watercourse. (Hence, the primeval serpent encircling Atum not only emerges from the cosmic sea; it is itself "the outflow of the Primeval Flood.")861

Sumero-Babylonian cosmology knows "the river of the *girdle* of the great god"—a world-encircling ocean which is also called "the river of the *snake.*"862 According to Hebrew and Arabic thought, states Wensinck, "The whole of the earth is round and the ocean surrounds it like a collar. Other authors compare the circle of the ocean around the earth with a wreath, a ring, or with the halo round the moon. *The commonest image of the ocean, however, is that of a serpent.*"863 Thus the famous Leviathan "grips his tail between his teeth and forms a ring around the ocean."864 The Scandinavian Midgard serpent occupied the same circular sea, biting his tail.865 The Greek Okeanos, the boundary of the world, was the serpent Chronos.866 Even the Aztecs knew "the sea as a circumambient Great Serpent."867

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854 *Ibid.*, 332.

855 Quoted in Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 266.

856 *Ibid.*, 332.

857 Horapollo 1.c.2.

858 R. C. Thompson, *Reports*, 249.

859 Wensinck, "Ideas of the Western Semites," 61*ff.*

860 Brown, *Researches*, Vol. II, 105.

861 Clark, *op. cit.*, 50.

862 Sayce, *op. cit.*, 281. [Emphasis added.]

863 Wensinck, "The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites," 25. [Emphasis added.]

864 Graves and Patai, *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis*, 51-52.

865 MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, 328.

866 Onians, *op. cit.*, 249-51.

867 Alexander, *Latin American Mythology*, 57.

Nor can one ignore the identical serpent enclosing, or forming, the great god's throne. Muslim legends recall a brilliant serpent around the throne of Allah: "Then Allah surrounded it by a serpent . . . this serpent wound itself around the throne."868 The same serpent, in Hebrew accounts, wound itself around the cosmic throne-wheel of Solomon: "And a silver dragon was on the machinery of the throne."869 ". . . And a silver serpent bore the wheel of the throne."870

One remembers also the serpentine wheeled seats of such Greek figures as Triptolemos and Demeter.871 The seat of the Mayan god Anhel is a serpent,872 much like the snake-seat of the primordial pair recalled by the Miztecs.873 Just as the Egyptian serpent-dragon Set becomes the throne of Osiris, so do the parallel figures of Tiamat and Leviathan become the thrones of Marduk and Yahweh in Babylonian and Hebrew imagery.874

So also is the *temple* likened to the circular serpent. Sumerian hymns describe the cosmic temple "in heaven like a dragon gleaming."875 This dragon-like abode answers to the Babylonian sanctuary of Ea, represented by a serpent or fish.876 Belonging to the same class are the Uraei who form the walls of the heavenly dwelling of Osiris,877 the serpentine temples or *dracontia* of Abury,878 the "Iguana House" of Mayan ritual,879 and the girdling snake of the Greek Achis, which surrounded the *temenos* or inner shrine of the gods.880 The Muslims declare that at the founding of the Sacred House of the Ka'ba, a serpent with a "glittering appearance" wrapped itself around the wall "so that its tail approached its head."881

The great father's dwelling was the encircling serpent or dragon—issuing from the cosmic sea. And it matters not whether the abode be termed a "temple" or a "city," for the cosmic city was equally tied to the imagery of the circular serpent, as confirmed by Egyptian illustrations of a serpent encircling the district of Hermopolis;882 the Hebrew imagery of Leviathan surrounding the primeval, celestial Jerusalem; and the serpentine enclosure of the Teutonic Asgard, the city of the gods.

Always we encounter the same serpent, glittering in the light and marking out the primordial enclosure. In the case of the Egyptian Eye and crown the identity with the Uraeus serpent is spelled out with uncanny boldness.

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868 Wensinck, "Ideas of the Western Semites," 62.

869 *Ibid.*, 63.

870 *Ibid.*, 63.

871 Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 221, 229.

872 J. Eric and S. Thompson, *op. cit.*, 268.

873 Emerson, *Indian Myths*, 347.

874 I intend to take up such imagery in greater detail in the second volume of this work.

875 Langdon, *Sumerian Liturgies and Psalms*, 316.

876 Wensinck, "Ideas of the Western Semites," 65.

877 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 377.

878 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 735.

879 J. Eric and S. Thompson, *op. cit.*, 212-14.

880 Nuttall, *op. cit.*, 522.

881 Wensinck, "Ideas of the Western Semites," 64.

882 Clark, *op. cit.*, 53.

Egyptian hymns locate the enclosing Uraeus on the "brow" of the great god, and *this circular serpent is at once the band of the single Eye and the circle of the crown*:

*He has come to you, O NT-Crown; He has come to you, O Fiery Serpent . . . O Great Crown . . . Ikhet the Serpent has adorned you . . . because you are Horus encircled with the protection of his eye.*883

*O King, the dread of you is the intact Eye of Horus, the White Crown, the serpent-goddess who is in Nekheb.*884

To wear the crown is to wear the Fiery Serpent, which, in turn, is to reside within the enclosure or "protection" of the Eye. Though offering no explanation, Clark recognizes the identity of these cosmic images: "The Eye is elevated as the defensive cobra which—on the pattern of the earthly pharaohs—encircled the brows of the High God," he writes.885

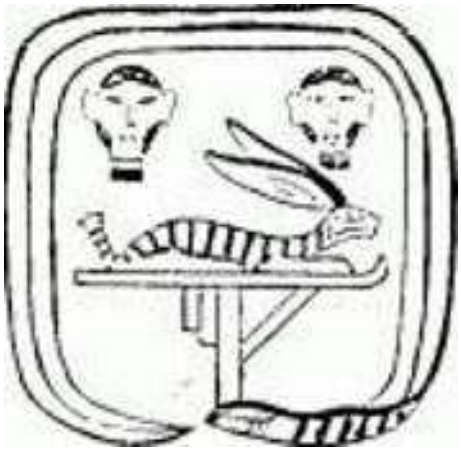

Figure 42. The circular serpent encircling Hermopolis.

The connection immediately explains why the Sumerian *Mus*-crown, conceived as a golden band, was "the great *dragon*."886

Though the circular serpent appears in many guises, at root there is only one such creature, for its diverse forms—as the Cosmos, "earth," temple, city, throne, crown, and Eye—are simply the different mythical formulations of the circumpolar enclosure.

These unnatural roles of the circular serpent—which mythologists tend to regard as the most irrational and unfathomable aspects of ancient symbolism—actually provide one of the most significant unifying threads.

In Summary: A Coherent Doctrine

Saturn's primordial home was a simple enclosure, a dwelling universally recorded by the sign . Mythmaking imagination expressed the enclosure in many ways, and it is the very variety of formulations which testifies to the band's overwhelming impact on the ancient world.

To deal meaningfully with this imagery one must admit the influence of a celestial order vastly different from that familiar to us today. We customarily think of "myth" as the opposite of "reality." Yet the consistency of the testimony suggests that the mythical view, passed down to us through sacred signs, monuments, and literature, connects us with a very real world confronted by the first mythmakers.

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883 *Pyramid Texts* 195-98.

884 *Pyramid Text* 900.

885 *Op. cit.*, 93.

886 Sjöberg and Bergmann, *op. cit.*, 29. [Emphasis added.]

The present heavens explain neither the ancient rites of kingship nor the array of astral symbols which grew up around the king—who was conceived as the human incarnation of the ruling divinity in heaven. Always, the ritual and symbol refer to an age different from our own, an age when Saturn, the central sun, ruled from the celestial pole, encircled by his band of "glory."

Saturn's band was the primeval Cosmos, viewed as the planet-god's own consort, the womb on the cosmic waters. The myths alternately depict the band as a revolving island in the sky, a cord of rope forming the boundary of Saturn's domain, a shining egg, a shield, and the creator's collar, belt, or girdle.

This was the "earth" which (in the universal creation legend) the great god raised from the celestial sea. In mythical history it became the ancestral land of peace and plenty—Adam's paradise. Saturn's kingdom possessed the form of a great wheel; it was the creator's revolving throne, the celestial city, the lost navel or Middle Place, where (cosmic, mythical) history took its start. Around the border of the heavenly "land" flowed a circular river or ocean.

The same band was Saturn's revolving temple, which he wore as a crown and in which he dwelt as the pupil of the all-seeing Eye. As the cosmic vase, the band housed Saturn's waters of life.

And finally, Saturn's band appears in the guise of a shining serpent wrapped around the central sun and denoted by the Egyptian sign .

Divorced from the archetypal enclosure the various symbols (temples, crowns, thrones, wheels, etc.) appear as isolated forms of uncertain origin. We simply take them as "facts." Why, then, were these forms systematically related in language, art, ritual, and myth? It is not a question of later generations recklessly joining unrelated images. The further back we go the greater the unity. The best evidence of the harmonious vision comes from the oldest sources of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Here we find the central sun wearing the cosmic city and temple as a crown; taking as his throne the eye of heaven, the holy land, or the vase of upper waters; shining in the centre of an egg called the "earth"; and encircled by a river which forms the wall of the temple but also the circle of the gods. In each case we find that the symbol refers directly to the womb of the mother goddess enclosing the great father Saturn.

In reviewing this imagery of the enclosure one confronts many dominant motifs of ancient religion. Whatever the mythical formulation of the band, the hymns celebrate its presence at the polar centre. Yet who can locate a source of the imagery in today's tranquil heavens? Where is this revolving river of "splendour and terror"? Where is the city of "the White Wall," the "clear and radiant" holy land, the temple "like a dragon gleaming," the "throne of light," the "golden" egg, or the "fiery" serpent?

If the texts present alternative versions of the band, they never question its existence in primeval times. It is the archaic reality concealed within a massive body of myths and symbols, all pointing to the signs and as images of Saturn, the polar sun.

VIII: The Cosmic Mountain

To the images of the enclosed sun ⊙ *and enclosed sun-cross* ⊕ *ancient myths add the cosmic mountain—a column of light rising along the world axis and visually appearing to hold aloft the great god's home. The signs of the Saturnian mountain are* ⏃ *and* ⏄.

Throughout the world one encounters the story of a shining peak which once rose to the centre of heaven. Though this cosmic mountain appears under many different names, accounts from every section of the world tell much the same story. The Egyptians knew the great column as the Primeval Hill, the Babylonians as the World Mountain. The mount passed into Hinduism as the cosmic Meru, into Iranian myth as Hera-Berezaiti, and into Chinese myth and astrology as Kwen-Lun. Mexican cosmology gave it the name Colhuacan. Its most familiar representatives were Olympus and Zion.

But does not Olympus refer to the well-known peak in Macedonia, and Zion to the small hill in Palestine? In truth the mythical Olympus and the mythical Zion are the same mountain; only their terrestrial representations differ. When the ancients sanctified a familiar hill, giving it the name of the primeval mount, they sought to characterize their own land as a duplication of the "homeland." The local mountain took its mythical attributes from the *cosmic* peak. Always the sacred mount rises "higher than any mountain on earth," attaining the polar centre and functioning as the cosmic axis.

Legends of the heaven-sustaining peak say that the creator—the central sun—ruled his kingdom from the mountaintop, where stood the original paradise with its four life-bearing streams.

Egypt

According to the long-standing belief of Egyptologists, the sun-god rises over the eastern horizon each morning and sinks below the western horizon each evening. In widely accepted translations of the texts, one repeatedly finds such wording as "horizon from which Re goes forth,"887 "Thou living Soul who comest forth from the horizon,"888 or "Re riseth in his horizon."889 But if the Egyptian light god truly rises from the horizon then surely it is not Saturn, the steadfast *polar* sun.

A closer look at the terminology is needed. As I have already observed, the words which the translators render as "rise" (*pert*, *uben*, *un*) mean literally "to appear," "to shine," "to send forth light," etc. The conventional choice of the word "rise" follows from the belief that the hymns describe the *solar orb* emerging in the east.

But what about the word "horizon," which occurs with such frequency in the standard translations? The Egyptian term for the place of the sun's coming forth is *khut*, whose literal sense is anything but "horizon."890

887 *Pyramid Text* 585.

888 Budge, The *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 481.

889 *Ibid.*, 400.

890 *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 248, note 7.

The hieroglyph for *khut* (or) combines two signs—the Re or Aten sign and the sign for "mountain" . (I take up the latter sign in the section on the cleft peak.) Its literal meaning, as noted by Renouf, is "Mount of Glory" and "there is no reason why we should continue to use the misleading term horizon." Literally, the great god does not "rise from the *horizon*," but "shines in the Mount of Glory." To what did the Egyptians refer by such language?

The hymns speak not of the present world order, but the former, when the creator took as his seat the pillar of the Cosmos. An inscription of the Karnak temple extols the *khut* or Mount of Glory as "the venerable hill of *primeval beginning.*"891 Hearkening to the same age, the Edfu texts recall "the First Occasion in the *High Hill* at the beginning of Coming Into Existence."892 In the *Pyramid Texts* we read, "I am the Primeval Hill of the land in the midst of the sea, whose hand no earthlings have grasped."893 (The reader will now recognize the "midst of the sea" as the polar "heart," "navel," or "centre" of the cosmic waters.)

The myths and liturgies of the Mount of Glory (Primeval Hill) relate that the creator raised the mount from the Sea of Chaos. States Frankfort: "Within the expanse of the primeval waters he created dry land, the Primeval Hill, which became the centre of the earth, or at least the place round which the earth solidified. Local traditions differ as regards the details; but everywhere the site of creation, the first land to emerge from chaos, was thought to have been charged with vital power. And each god counting as Creator was made to have some connection with this Hill."894

If Frankfort's summary is accurate, then the Primeval Hill is directly related to the enclosure of earth which the creator gathered together as a stable dwelling—the Cosmos.

To discern the connection of the mount and enclosure we must return once more to the legends of Atum. The texts of all periods agree that in the beginning Atum, or Khepera, floated alone in the Abyss without a resting place. The god recalls the original epoch:

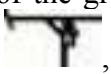
. . . When I was alone in the waters . . .

before I had found anywhere to stand or sit,

before Heliopolis [the celestial earth] *had*

been founded that I might be there,

*before a perch had been formed for me to sit on . . .*895

"I found no place where I could stand," states the god in a similar account.896 In the hieroglyph for "to stand," (*aha*) the key sign is , conveying the meaning "to support," "stability." Which is to say that in the beginning the god wandered without a *stable support.* This was "before a *perch* had been formed for me to sit on." The glyph for "perch" is , signifying the primordial pedestal of the great god. It was a common Egyptian practice to place the emblems of the creator upon the perch sign  , for the perch or pedestal means the

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891 Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 154. [Emphasis added.]

892 Reymond, *The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple*, 48-49. [Emphasis added.]

893 *Pyramid Text* 1022.

894 *Op. cit.*, 51-52.

895 Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, 46.

896 Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol. I, 309.

same thing as "mountain." Thus Osiris, enthroned upon the Primeval Hill, is "like an exalted one upon thy pedestal,"[897] while Anup, "the god who is on his mountain," is also "the god who is on his pedestal."[898]

It seems that the creation accounts refer to a time before the appearance of the great mountain or perch. Prior to the emergence of this foundation occurs the central act of creation, recalled in numerous accounts: the bringing forth of the *khu*—"brilliant lights," "words of power"—the fiery "waters" which erupted directly from the creator and came to be recalled as radiant "speech."

A literal translation of one text yields the following:

I could find no place to stand

I uttered the incantation

[khut] *with my heart.*

I laid the foundation of Maa.

I produced all the aru [the "guardians" of the deep, the assembly].

I was alone.

I had not spit in the form of Shu.

I had not poured out Tefnut.

No other worked with me.

I laid a foundation with my own heart . . .

I poured out (seed, water) in the form of Shu.

I emitted (seed, water) in the form of Tefnut.[899]

The language indicates that the creator, originally alone, "uttered" or poured out from his "heart" the watery mass (*khu*, *khut*) in which the primordial foundation was laid. That this foundation is identified with the gods Maa or Shu is crucial: for *Maa and Shu signify the cosmic pillar holding aloft the central sun.*

That the pillar of Shu was born from the *khu* or *khut* emitted by Atum is the explicit statement of the *Coffin Texts*, where Shu declares:

I am life, the Lord of years, living for ever, Lord of eternity

the eldest one that Atum made in [or from] *his Khu*

in giving birth to Shu.[900]

Or again, Shu announces:

. . . I came into being in the limbs of the Self-Creator.

He formed me in [with] *his heart and he created me in his Khu.*[901]

The Egyptian priests clearly know that the Shu-pillar, formed in the fiery abyss, was the same thing as the "perch," or "pedestal" upon which the heart of heaven eventually found "rest." Thus, while one *Coffin Text*

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897 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 159.

898 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 606, 624, 627.

899 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 309.

900 Clark, *op. cit.*, 86.

901 *Ibid.*, 83.

reads, “I am raised aloft on my standard (, “perch”) above yonder places of the Abyss,”902 another states, “I am high in the form of Horus . . . He has established my heart on his great standard. I do not fall on account of Shu.”903 The “foundation of Maa,” cited above, refers to the same mountain or pillar. A common glyph for *maa* is , the very image used to designate the Primeval Hill. Often the glyph is simply read as the “pedestal” of the great god. In its root meaning, *maa* or *maat* denotes “the stable, enduring foundation,” the source of cosmic regularity. (It is the axle of the Cosmos.) Thus the creator, resting upon the axle-pillar, is he who “rests upon Maat.”

In the Egyptian language, the concept “support” or “foundation” merges with “mountain” or “hill.” The word *thes*, for example, means “support,” “to bear, lift up.” but also “mountain.” The reason is that the only mountain with which the ritual is concerned is the *primeval* mountain, the foundation of the Cosmos. “May I endure in the sky like a [or *the*] mountain, like a [the] support,” reads a *Pyramid Text.*904

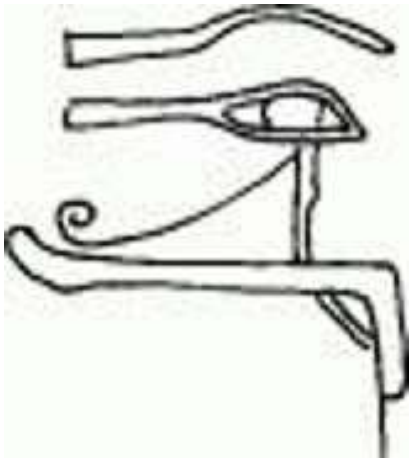

Figure 43. The solitary Eye upon the primordial “Perch.”

The cosmic pillar, according to the creation accounts, originated in the seed or water of life flowing from the creator Atum: *the very khu or khut which congealed into the circle of* “*glory*” *took form also as the heaven-sustaining column.* Indeed, one finds that in much of the symbolism, the enclosure and the mount are inseparable—the enclosure being considered as the hollow summit of the mount. (See below)

To understand the Egyptian hieroglyph for the Mount of Glory (*khut*,), one must consider the full range of meanings attached to the terms *khu* and *khut.* In their most elementary sense the words refer to the *fiery essence* or luminous matter which exploded from the creator. From this root meaning are derived a number of interrelated hieroglyphic terms.

When written , *khu* is often translated “soul” or “spirit.” The reference is not to invisible powers but to flaming debris, conceived as the erupting substance of the creator and personified in the ritual as the light-spirits of the abyss.

Thus, when written with the determinative (*i.e.*,), *khut* means “fire.”

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902 Faulkner, *The Coffin Texts*, 226.

903 *Ibid.*, 230-31.

904 *Pyramid Text* 1559.

But the mythmakers interpreted the same erupting debris as visible "speech" or "words" uttered by the creator. Hence *khu* ( ) means "words of power" while *khut* ( ) denotes the "creative incantation" which produced the fiery, watery mass.

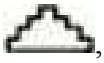
In fashioning the Cosmos or celestial earth the creator gathered the sea of "words" into a circle of "glory," sometimes denoted by the sign (*khu*, often written or). This is the enclosure of the Aten , the great god's encircling "aura" or "halo."

But the most common symbol of the creator's "glory" (*khu*, *khut*) is the sign , depicting not only an enclosure but vertical streams of light ascending the world axis. It is no coincidence, then, that this very *khu* sign also denotes *Shu*, the light-pillar formed in the primordial sea. The radiant column, as proclaimed in the texts, was "poured out" by the creator Atum.

Of precisely the same significance is the *khut* sign , the "Mount of Glory," or more specifically, "the mount and enclosure of the khu." Because the glyph is regularly used in the sense of "the place from which the sun shines forth," Egyptologists as a whole overlook all the interconnected meanings of the glyph and simply translate it as "the horizon." But as we have seen, "the place from which the sun shines forth" means the circumpolar enclosure, not the eastern horizon. In the Egyptian language it is impossible to separate the polar "place *par excellence*" from the cosmic mountain.

To this celestial peak the Egyptians continually looked back in their myths and rites. On behalf of the deceased king the priests poured a heap of sand on the floor inside the pyramid, placing atop the sand a statue of the king and reciting a prayer which began:

Rise upon it, this land which came forth as [or from] *Atum, the spittle which came forth as* [or from] *Kheprer, assume your form upon it, rise high upon it.*905

The sand represented the Primeval Hill, which the Egyptians often depicted by a flight of stairs, or  , leading to the centre and summit of heaven. If Atum, or Re, shone from the summit of the hill, so did Osiris: "Osiris sits in judgement in a palace in the Primeval Mound, which is in the centre of the world," writes Clark.906

"Hail, O Osiris, thou hast received thy sceptre and the place whereon thou art to rest, and thy steps are under thee," reads the *Book of the Dead*.907 The hill was the fixed resting place of the central sun, its summit the supreme object of ascension symbolism. The king beseeches the great god: ". . . May I be established upon my *resting place* like the Lord of Life."908 The obvious Egyptian monuments to the mount so conceived are the great pyramids, which render in stone the ancient idea of a stairway to and support of the heavenly dwelling. The steps signify the primeval foundation laid by the creator.

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905 Clark, *op. cit.*, 41.

906 *Ibid.*, 178.

907 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 388-89.

908 *Ibid*., 251. [Emphasis added.]

In all Egyptian symbols of the mount one finds the same general significance. Always, it is the *stable pillar* supporting the *resting* god.

One of the most famous representations of the Primeval Hill is the obelisk . The small pyramidion on top of the obelisk denoted the *Benben* stone (Foundation Stone), the Seed of Atum, the central sun. (The same form crowned the pyramid.)

Atum-Khepri, thou wert high as the Hill

*Thou didst shine forth as Benben.*909

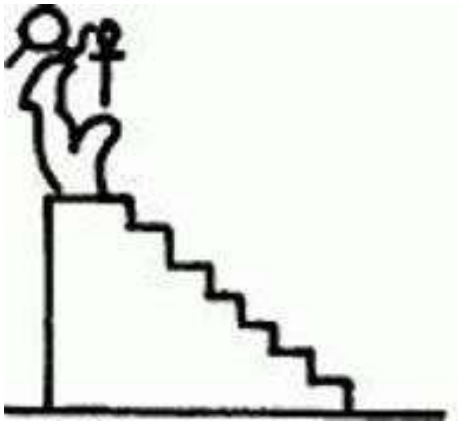

Figure 44. Egyptian Re atop the steps.

To the modern mind it may seem peculiar that the foundation stone should lie at the summit rather than the base of the cosmic hill. But when one realizes that the summit was the fixed *centre* of the turning Cosmos the idea takes on a remarkable logic. Atum, the stone of the foundation, was the "Firm Heart of the Sky," resting upon a stationary support:

The Great God lives,

*fixed in the middle of the sky upon his support.*910

So reads a *Coffin Text*, in obvious reference to Atum or Re, whom Clark terms "the arbiter of destiny perched on the top of the world pole."911 Thus the obelisk , the symbol of Atum resting on the cosmic pillar, came to be employed as an ideograph for the Egyptian word *men*, signifying "stability" and "to rest in one place." *Men* also means "mountain" and "pedestal."

Derived from the same root is the Egyptian word *mena* or *Menat*, the celestial "mooring post." The Egyptians conceived the stationary pillar as the stake to which the lights of the revolving assembly were bound. The cosmic mountain is the *Mena-uret*, the "Great Mooring Post," symbolized by the sign . (The rope drawn around the neck of the configuration confirms the close connection of the pillar and cosmic bond).912

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909 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 153.

910 Clark, *op. cit.*, 59.

911 *Ibid.*, 41.

912 Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, 243; see *Pyramid Text* 794c.

It seems more than a little likely that the Egyptian *Mena-uret* was the very pillar from which the Muslims derived the *minaret*, the lofty tower attached to the Muslim mosque, and designated *Qutb*, the "pole" or "axis."

While in many myths the mount is personified as a secondary divinity (Shu, Maa) holding aloft the creator, the hill may also appear as the trunk or lower limbs of the creator himself. Atum, as suggested by several sources cited above, is inseparable from the mount on which he rests. The great god Ptah merges with the god Tatunen, a personification of the Primeval Hill, so that the *Book of the Dead* can say "Thy beauties are like unto the pillar of the god *Ptah*."913 The glyph for the great god An is , meaning "pillar."

A famous Egyptian emblem of the pillar was the *Tet* , the special symbol of Osiris. The Tet sign denotes the support of the Cosmos. "The idea of the Tet column," writes Clark, "is that it stands firmly upright."914 In the ritual these emblems serve as "world pillars holding up the sky and so guaranteeing . . . the world in which the king's authority holds good."915 Tet means "stability," "permanence." It is the pedestal of Osiris, the "resting heart" or "motionless heart." Significantly, many Egyptian illustrations of the Tet-column include a pair of human eyes at the top (fig. 151a), emphasizing that the column was (as Egyptologists often observe) the *trunk* or *backbone* of Osiris himself.

In other words, *the Egyptians viewed the cosmic mountain as the great god's own spinal column.* Hence the sign , depicting the pillar of the *khu* (or of Shu) as vertical streams of light, also means "back" or "backbone." The word *aat*, signifying the primeval "perch" or "pedestal" of the creator, possesses the additional meaning of "backbone."

Pertaining to the same symbolism is the pillar sign , read as *sept*, "to be provided with." Helping to explain the sign is the root *sep* or *sepa*, "stability," often written with the determinative —"spinal column."916 So too, while the word *thes* refers to the primordial "pillar," "prop," or "mountain," *thes* can also mean "backbone."

Figure 45. Tet, the "stable" pillar of the Cosmos.

913 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 582. [Emphasis added.]

914 *Op. cit.*, 236.

915 *Ibid.*, 237.

916 Énel, *Les Origines de la Gènese et l'Enseignement des Temples de l'Ancienne Égypte*, 117.

Through extension of the symbolism in a different direction, the cosmic mountain became the creator's "staff" or "sceptre." Texts and reliefs depict the great god's sceptre as the support of heaven or of the god himself.917

The theme may not always be recognized by conventional schools, however. A previously cited hymn from the *Book of the Dead* proclaims to Osiris, "Hail, O Osiris, thou hast received thy sceptre and the place whereon thou art to rest and the steps are under thee."918 Few have stopped to think that the sceptre signifies the same "resting place" as the steps; both refer to the column of the Cosmos. Thus, in the sign the sceptre holds aloft the glyph for "heaven" .

A spell of the *Coffin Texts* reads, "I am the guardian of this great prop which separates the earth from the sky."919 But another spell declares, ". . . That *staff* which separated sky and earth is in my hand."920 Often the sceptre is in the form of a lotus, or papyrus holding aloft the great god.921

Whatever the particular symbolism of the cosmic mountain, all sources agree on one point: *the revolving* Aten *forms the hollow summit of the peak.* To shine in the Aten is to shine "in the midst" or "in the interior" of the *khut* , the Mount of Glory. The god occupies "the enclosure of the High Hill." "O very high mountain! I hold myself in thy enclosure," proclaims the king.922

A literal translation of Egyptian texts will yield:

*O you in your egg, shining in your Aten, growing bright in your Mount of Glory.*923

*Grow bright and diminish at your desire . . . You send forth light every day from the middle of the Mount of Glory.*924

*You shine in the Mount of Glory. The Aten receives praise, resting in the mountain and giving life to the world.*925

*Homage to you, O you shining in the Aten, Living One coming forth in the Mount of Glory.*926

*O Re in the Mount of Glory.*927

*Re shines in the Mount of Glory.*928

*The Osiris Nu is at rest in the Mount of Glory.*929

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917 Schafer, "Altägyptische Bilder der Auf- und Untergehenden Sonne," 19, note 7.

918 Budge, *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 388-89.

919 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 176.

920 *Ibid.*, 148. [Emphasis added.]

921 Moret, "Le Lotus et la Naissance des Dieux in Égypte," 501.

922 Massey, *Ancient Egypt*, 363.

923 Cf. Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 104.

924 Cf. Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 320.

925 Cf. Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 11.

926 Cf. *ibid.*, 481.

927 Cf. *ibid.*, 393.

928 Cf. *ibid.*, 400.

You shine in the Mount of Glory day by day.[930]

Again and again the same terminology occurs. The sun-god does not rise from the mount, but shines *in* it. I know this claim may not be welcomed by those experts who have built their entire interpretation of Egyptian cosmic symbolism around the rising and setting solar orb. But having reviewed all of the primary Egyptian sources I have yet to find an early text which, when translated literally, suggests that the sun-god (during his reign) ever leaves the cosmic peak. Though he sails in a ship, as we shall see, only the ship moves, revolving round the stationary god. And though the texts describe a peak of the right and of the left, they are two peaks of a *singular* mount.

The widely respected Egyptologist W. R. Kristensen tells us that fundamentally there was only one "horizon" (*i.e.*, *khut*, Mount of Glory). The two "horizons" were "viewed as essentially identical; what applied to one held true for the other too. That they were geographically separated could not obliterate the impression. In mythical cosmography they often assume one another's functions. *The place where the light sets is also called the place where it rises . . .*"[931]

To what cosmic idea did the Egyptians refer in order to speak of the sun rising and setting on the same mountain? Kristensen assumes that while sacred cosmology united the two mountains, they were "geographically separated." Holding to the solar interpretation, one could hardly believe anything else.

The problem does not lie with the texts, but with the solar interpretation, which looks for imagery of a rising and setting sun where there is none. The Egyptian sun-god "comes out" ("grows bright") and "goes in" ("diminishes") *em hetep*, "while standing in one place." That "place" is the enclosure of the stationary summit.

The universal signs of the sun on the mountaintop are and . To the former corresponds the Egyptian hieroglyph denoting *khut*, the Mount of Glory, or *Shu*, the divine personification of the Mount, but also serving as the determinative of "spinal column." Other Egyptian illustrations depict the disk of the Aten supported by the Tet-column, or resting over the obelisk (as was customary in the earliest forms of the obelisk),[932] or raised aloft by the divine sceptre. The consistent theme is that the enclosure and the Mount are inseparable.

In the hieroglyphs, the simple form of the *mena-uret* or Great Mooring Post is , but the larger illustrations offer a more detailed portrait of the binding post. A papyrus, for example, shows the goddess Hathor amid the celestial garden, wearing the *Menat* symbol.[933] Here the form is: .

The post, or "pillar of the cord (Cosmos)," appears to sustain a circle enclosing the image , the Egyptian sign of the four life-bearing streams (*un*).

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929 Cf. *ibid.*, 446.

930 Cf. *ibid.*, 71.

931 Quoted in Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri*, 29. [Emphasis added.]

932 Budge, *Gods*, Vol.I, 354.

933 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, fig. 39.

Clarification of the mooring-post symbol is provided by a *Coffin Text*, in which the "All-Lord" (ruler of the Cosmos) looks back to the primordial age and the "four good deeds which my own heart did for me in the midst of the serpent-coil [cord, bond, Cosmos] . . . I did four good deeds within the portal of the Mount of Glory. I made the four winds that every man might breathe thereof."[934]

Does not the above image of the Great Mooring Post answer directly to these lines? On the Mount of Glory stands the garden of abundance, animated by the life elements radiating in luminous streams from the central sun—the great god's "heart."

Of the Egyptian paradise, Massey writes, "The general tradition is that this paradise was a primeval place of birth and that it was in the north, *upon the summit of a mount now inaccessible to the living anywhere on earth.*"[935] This paradisal enclosure at the summit was the cosmic city—and every sacred city—be it Heliopolis, Thebes, Memphis, Busiris, or Abydos—mirrored the history of the prototype, symbolically resting atop the Primeval Hill. Of the deceased king, the *Coffin Texts* announce:

> *Annubis is mindful of you in Busiris, your soul rejoices in Abydos where your body is happy* [*em hetep*, "at rest"] *on the High Hill.*[936]

When the deceased ruler enters the city of the god-king, he returns to the Holy Land, the celestial earth at the summit of the polar mountain.

Osiris, the "god on the top of the steps [Primeval Hill],"[937] is the universal lord "in possession of a seat, his heart being at peace [*em hetep*, "at rest"] on the Mountain of the Necropolis [city of the ancestors]"[938] Amen-Re is the "dweller in Thebes, the great god who appeareth in the Mount of Glory."[939] The name of Abydos—*Abtu*—signifies the "mountain of the heart."

In the same way every temple, as a symbol of the Saturnian enclosure, magically rested on the Primeval Hill. "Each and every temple was supposed to stand on it," writes Frankfort. "This thought is applied even to temples built quite late in the history of Egypt."[940] Surely the temple builders knew that they were not constructing the local dwelling on the *actual* Primeval Hill; but in imbuing the temple with the *mythical* qualities of the original dwelling, the architects gave concrete form to an ideal defined in the beginning. When Hatshepsut identifies the Karnak temple as the "Mount of Glory upon earth, the venerable hill of primeval beginning,"[941] she connects the local edifice with the central hill of creation, the mount on which the house of the sun-god originally stood.

States Frankfort: "The queen, by beautifying Karnak, honoured the centre from which the creation took its start . . . The identity of the temples with the Primeval Hill amounts to a sharing of essential quality and is expressed in their names and in their architectural arrangements by means of ramps or steps. Each temple rose from its entrance through its successive courts and halls to the Holy of Holies, which was thus situated at a point

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934 Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 7.

935 *Op. cit.*, 376. [Emphasis added.]

936 Clark, *op. cit.*, 134.

937 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 117.

938 Piankoff, *The Wandering of the Soul*, 103.

939 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 17.

940 *Op. cit.*, 150.

941 *Ibid.*, 154.

noticeably higher than the entrance. There the statue, barge or fetish of the god was kept, resting upon the Primeval Hill."[942]

In all basic details, the Egyptian symbolism of the Primeval Hill corresponds to the cosmic images , . The Mount forms in the cosmic sea, stretching upward along the world axis to hold aloft the central sun. The hollow summit of the Mount is the circle of the Aten, within whose enclosure the sun "grows bright" and "diminishes" with the cycle of night and day. This Mount of Glory is the site of the original paradise, the city or temple of the Universal Monarch.

A review of similar imagery in other lands will show the influence of a world-wide tradition.

Mesopotamia

I have argued that the Egyptian Atum, the solitary god in the deep, is the very figure whom Babylonian astronomy identifies as the planet Saturn. Atum, "the Firm Heart of the Sky," stands "fixed in the middle of the sky upon his support."

Here, on the other hand, is a broken Sumerian reference to Ninurash, or Ninurta, the planet Saturn:

Whom the "god of the steady *star" upon a* foundation

To . . . cause to repose *in years of plenty.*[943]

Saturn, founder of the Golden Age, was the stationary light "upon a foundation," exactly as the Egyptian Atum. Accordingly, Babylonian astronomical texts give Saturn the name *Kaainu*, the Greek *kiun*, "pillar."

What was this foundation or pillar of Saturn? It was the "mountain of the an-ki [Cosmos]," formed—like the Egyptian counterpart—amid the waters of Chaos. ". . . Of the hill which I, the hero, have heaped up," proclaims Ninurta, "let its name be Hursag [mountain]."[944] This cosmic peak, whose "foundation is laid in the pure abyss," the Babylonians denominated "the mountain of the world."[945] Ninurta "scaled the mountain and scattered seed far and wide"[946] just as Atum, resting upon the Primeval Hill, radiated the seed of life in all directions.

"Here, in the Chaldean Olympus," writes Sayce, "the gods were imagined to have been born; its summit was hidden by the clouds, and the starry firmament seemed to rest upon it."[947]

In what portion of the sky did the ancient Mesopotamians locate the hill? Several texts, as normally translated, identify the Mount as "the place where the sun rises," seeming to fix the peak in the east.

Concerning the Hursag raised by Ninurta, a hymn reads:

Incantation—O Sun-god, from the great mountain is thy rising;

from the great mountain, the mountain of the ravine, is thy rising;

from the holy mound, the place of destinies, is thy rising.[948]

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942 *Ibid.*, 152.

943 Agrawala, *Sparks from the Vedic Fire*, 82-83. [Emphasis added.]

944 Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 81.

945 Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 99; Sayce, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, 360.

946 Langdon, *op. cit.*, 119.

947 *Op. cit.*, 360.

948 *Ibid.*, 515.

The texts also connect the lost land of Dilmun with a cosmic mountain, a peak which appears to be the same as the Hursag, for it is "the mountain of Dilmun, the place where the sun rises."949 The temple hymns employ the same terminology in describing the *Kur* ("mountain") as *Kur-d-utu-e'-a*, "the mountain where the sun rises." In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the hero journeys to the Mashu Mountain upon which the vault of heaven rests. Through its gate the sun comes forth.950

Mesopotamian reliefs show the sun-god standing upon a cleft peak virtually identical to the Egyptian "mountain" symbol (fig. 60). With the rarest exceptions, authorities identify the image with the solar orb rising over an eastern hill.

Certain writers, in fact, believe that the entire character of the mythical Mount can be explained by the simple experience of native races viewing the eastern sunrise. Jacobsen, for example, urges that we understand the Hursag as "the range of mountains bordering the Mesopotamian plain on the east. As seen on the eastern horizon, its shining peaks towering from earth up into heaven, the hursag appears indeed to belong equally to both of these cosmic entities, and the epithet . . . 'of both heaven and earth,' is therefore as forceful as it is apt."951

But there is a curious feature of the great column: *the mount from which the Babylonian sun-god "rises" is the same mount on which it "sets."* The singular hill is "the mountain of the night ["sunset"], the mountain of the sunrise, the *mountain of the* centre."952

Through the gate of the Mashu Mountain attained by Gilgamesh the sun-god Shamash comes forth. But the keepers of this mountain-gate are those who "guard Shamash at the rising *and setting* of the sun."953

Similarly, in connection with a hymn to the "Fire-god," containing enigmatic references to "the mountain of the sun-set" and "the mountain of the sunrise," Sayce writes: "We must consider the poet to have looked upon the mountain behind which the sun rose and set as *one and the same.*"954

Were the Sumero-Babylonian races oblivious of the geographical realities? One remembers Kristensen's observation that the Egyptian sun-god rises and sets upon a singular *khut* or "Mount of Glory." Is this seeming confusion of east and west due to the abandon of the mythmakers, or to a modern misunderstanding of ancient cosmology?

One can begin to resolve the dilemma by comprehending the primeval mount's title as "the mountain of the centre." The mount is the *pivot*, for the Assyro-Babylonians gave it the title "the axis of heaven"—a designation which leads Lenormant to describe the mount as "the column which joined the heavens and the earth and served as an axis to the celestial vault."955 This, of course, creates a conflict with the apparent solar imagery of the peak. Because the "sun"-god shines from the mountain, Lenormant seeks a compromise between the polar and the eastern locations: ". . . The mountain which acted as a pivot to the starry heavens was to the northeast . . ." Unfortunately, the compromise fails to explain either trait of the mountain: the Babylonian sunrise does not occur to the northeast,956 and in no sense could the northeast appear as a cosmic axis. One

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949 Kramer, *op. cit.*, 98.

950 Langdon, *op. cit.*, 209.

951 *Toward the Image of Tammuz*, 118.

952 Sayce, *op. cit.*, 449. [Emphasis added.]

953 Langdon, *op. cit.*, 209. [Emphasis added.]

954 *Op. cit.*, 361. [Emphasis added.]

955 *Chaldean Magic*, 152.

956 *Ibid.*; see also Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, Vol. I, 126-127.

faces the very paradox observed by Butterworth when he speaks of the "ambiguity between the Pole and the Sun."957

The entire difficulty vanishes when one recalls:

—that the Sumero-Babylonian sun-god does not literally rise, but "comes forth" or "grows bright."

—that the sun-god comes forth at the polar *centre* or *heart* of heaven.

—that the sun-god is Saturn.

These principles permit us to see that what conventional interpretations must regard as flatly contradictory aspects of the world mountain actually reveal a harmonious idea. The subject is "the mountain of the centre" at whose summit shines the stationary sun. The god "comes out" and "goes in" on the mountaintop, through the "gate" or "door" or "window" of the polar enclosure; but he accomplishes this without moving from his fixed abode.

The Babylonian sun-god, observed Warren, comes forth from "the true summit of the Earth, the Northern Pole."958

It is, in fact, impossible to comprehend Babylonian cosmology apart from the polar character of the great Mount. Obviously, to ascend the *world* mountain is to attain the world *summit*, and the summit is, as many writers have noted, the polar dwelling of An, the "midst" or "heart" of heaven.

In all ancient cosmologies the centre and summit meet at the celestial pole, and the Sumero-Babylonian world view is no exception. The Babylonian "Pole-star," states Robert Brown, "is seated in majesty on the summit of the northern heights."959 One of the names of the pole is *Dugga* (Semitic *Saqu*), which means "high" and is connected with the idea "to rise up," "to come to the top."960 The ruling polar god is thus the commander of the *summit*, which can only be the summit of the world mountain. The "Judge of Heaven [Anu] in the *centre* is bound" (*i.e.*, he is enclosed within the bond). And "in the Centre he fixed the Zenith"961 that is, he raised the world mountain, the primeval foundation. Like the Egyptian *Mena-uret*, the Sumerian mount becomes the "binding post" or "mooring post" (DIM.GAL) of the turning Cosmos.

The god on the cosmic mountain was the planet Saturn, "the pillar." Anu atop the "illustrious Mound," Shamash on the "mountain of the world," Ninurta at the summit of Hursag, Tammuz on the "Shepherd's Hill" of Arallu, and Enki ruling the Ekur ("mountain house"), or the "mountain of Dilmun"—all point to the planet Saturn, the primeval sun upon the column of the Cosmos .

With this cosmic mountain the Sumerians identified every city and every temple. As in Egypt, the Mount and enclosure always appear together, the Mount serving as the heavenly abode's support. Of Enki's temple, the hymns record, "The holy foundation made with skill rises from the nether-sea."962 Confirming this union of the cosmic temple and Mount are the titles of the sacred dwellings—"The House, Foundation of the An-ki (Cosmos)"; "House, the mountain of the Cosmos"; "House of the Mountain"; "Temple whose platform is suspended from heaven's midst . . . growing up like a mountain."

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957 *The Tree at the Navel of the Earth*, 124.

958 "The Gates of Sunrise in ancient Babylonian Art," 242.

959 *Researches into the Origins of the Primitive Constellations*, Vol. I, 184.

960 *Ibid*., 185.

961 Jensen, *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, 11. [Emphasis added.]

962 Langdon, "A Hymn to Eridu," 64.

In the same manner the hymns extol the local city as a duplication of the celestial prototype. The earthbound Eridu received its name from Enki's city above, the cosmic Eridu fashioned in the waters of the Apsu "like a holy highland" or "like a mountain." The city of Ninazu was the "mountain, pure place."963 Indeed the entire land of Akkad was symbolically linked with the great mountain and portrayed as the centre of the world.964

If the symbols of the enclosed sun are and , the symbols of the Mount and enclosure are and . The basic images occur throughout Mesopotamia. Depicted is the inaccessible paradise, a circular plain situated atop the mountain of the world and watered by four rivers flowing in four directions. Thus the Assyrians called the world mountain "the land [or mountain] of the four rivers." Massey recognized this as "the mythical Mount of the Pole and the four rivers of four quarters, which arose in Paradise."965 Yet neither Massey nor the more conventional authorities seem to have perceived that the mountain-paradise corresponds in every way to the simple images and .

Nor has any writer given sufficient attention to the extraordinary parallel between the Egyptian and Mesopotamian images of the cosmic mountain.

India

"In all the legends of India," states Lenormant, "the origin of humanity is placed on Mount Meru, the residence of the gods and the column which unites the sky to the earth."966 For the Hindus, Meru was the prototype of the sacred hill. As the Aryans spread through India they named many local peaks "Meru," deeming each a copy of the primeval mount.967

The original Meru was the *polar* mountain, its summit the quartered enclosure of the celestial paradise . Hindu sources describe the mount as a cosmic pillar fixed in the middle of the plain Jambu-dwipa, or rising in the midst of the cosmic sea. On the summit of this "golden mountain" or "Jewelled Peak" lies the heavenly city of Brahma, and around the peak lie the cardinal points and intermediate quarters.968 Toward each of the four quarters of the mountain paradise flows an outlet of the central water source, the celestial Ganges.969

Meru reaches the centre of heaven, and around its summit the stars revolve.970 The mount, states Lenormant, is "at once the north Pole and the centre of the habitable earth."971 The "world navel" means the *zenith.*

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963 Sjöberg and Bergmann, *The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns*, 51.

964 W. T. Warren, *Paradise Found*, 166-69.

965 *The Natural Genesis*, Vol. II, 21.

966 *Les Origines*, Vol. II, 17.

967 *Ibid.*; Faber, *The Origins of Pagan Idolatry*, Vol. III, 201.

968 Wilson, *Vishnu Purana*, Vol.II, 110*ff.*; Guenon, *Le Roi du Monde*, 85; O'Neill, *The Night of the Gods*, 400.

969 Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, Vol. II, 19.

970 *Ibid.*

971 *Ibid.*

Hindu ritual commemorates the cosmic pillar through the sacrificial stake or post. In the *Satapatha Brahmana*, the priest raises the sacred stake (*yupa*) with the words: "With thy crest thou hast touched the sky; with thy middle thou hast filled the air; with thy foot thou hast steadied the earth."[972] The cosmic pillar was the foundation of heaven: "Prop thou the sky! fill the air! stand firm on the earth."[973] "A stay art thou! Do thou make firm the sky!"[974]

This "firm" or "stable" support corresponds in every way to the primordial foundation of Egyptian and Mesopotamian cosmologies. The *Satapatha Brahmana* locates the post in the *centre* of the sacrifice shed (*Sadas*), itself a symbol of the Cosmos. The participants in the ritual form a circle around the post and touch it with the words, "Here is stability . . . Here is joy."[975]

The cosmic post, Eliade informs us, was the axis of the world. By mystically ascending the celestial pillar the sacrificer attained the cosmic centre and summit.[976]

The Indian world pillar, whether considered as a cosmic mountain (*Meru*) or as a pole or stake reaching from earth to heaven, is that which sustains the central sun. Buddhist iconography reviewed by Coomaraswamy depicts the wheel of the "sun" raised upon a cosmic column called "the pillar of fire."[977] To the solar mythologists the pillar can only be in the east, the direction of sunrise. Yet Coomaraswamy writes: "The wheel is supported by a column, the *Axis of the Universe*."[978] The "sun," in other words, means not the wandering solar orb, but the Buddha or Brahma—the "true sun" which "after having risen thence upwards . . . rises and sets no more. It remains alone in the centre."[979]

The Indian pillar—reflecting the cosmic images and —serves at once as the foundation of the Cosmos and the axle of the revolving wheel above. That the *axle* is the pillar is confirmed in the *Rig Veda*: ". . . by the axle of his wheeled-car indeed, by his abilities, he pillars apart Heaven and Earth."[980] Resting atop the axle-pillar, the great god appears as the "unmoved mover" of the revolving wheel.[981]

Thus the "axle-born" Buddha resides at the centre or nave of the wheel, imparting motion to the turning circumference while himself remaining motionless. The wheel, in turn, rests upon "a universal ground" or foundation, a lotus-like pillar. "The pillar extends from Earth to Heaven; it is the axis of the Universe," states Coomaraswamy.[982] Buddhist art and architecture give numerous and elaborate expressions to the idea, but reduced to its fundamentals, it is simply the polar "sun"-wheel sustained by the cosmic mountain .

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972 Eggeling, *Satapatha Brahmana*, III, 7, 1, 14.

973 *Ibid.*, III, 6, 1, 15; Eliade, *Le Chamanisme el les Techniques Archaïques de l'Extase*, 362-63.

974 *Satapatha Brahmana*, I, 2, 1, 10.

975 *Ibid.*, Part IIn 140-43, 454, note 3.

976 Eliade, *op. cit.*, 363.

977 *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, Figs. 1-5.

978 *Ibid.*, note to Fig. 2. [Emphasis added.]

979 De Saussure, *Les Origines de l'Astronomie Chinoise*, 231, 249.

980 *Rig Veda* X, 89, 4, in Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*, 29.

981 *Ibid.*, 28-29.

982 *Ibid.*, 34.

Japan, China, Iran, Siberia

With the axis-mountain of Indian thought we can bracket closely related examples from neighbouring lands:

A title of the Indian Meru was *Sumeru*, the "excellent" Meru, a name which Buddhism carried into China as *Siumi*, and to Japan as *Shumi*. Even the relatively late Chinese commentary the *Li-Khi* locates Mount Siumi in the "middle" of the Cosmos, *i.e.*, at the pole.983 The Japanese Mount Shumi was, according to Hepburn, "a Buddhist fabulous mountain of wonderful height, forming the axis of every Universe, and the centre around which all the heavenly bodies revolve."984

The most common name of the polar mountain in China is *Kwen-lun.* Called the world's highest mountain, Kwen-lun stood at "the centre of the earth."985 On its summit lay a shining circular plain, recalled as a celestial homeland whose "sparkling fountains and purling streams contain the far-famed ambrosia."986 The paradise, notes Warren, possesses "a living fountain from which flow in opposite directions the four great rivers of the world."987

Named "the Pearl Mountain," Kwen-Lun rises to the celestial pole, the abode of the first king Shang-ti.988 Around it revolve the visible heavens.989 Kwen-lun is "described as a stupendous heaven-sustaining mountain, marking the centre or pole."990 It is the "Great Peak of Perfect Harmony," whose summit displays Shang-ti's palace, named *Tsze-wei*, "a celestial space around the N. Pole."991

Distinct from Kwen-lun, but representing the same idea, is the Chinese Mount Kulkun, designated as the "King of the Mountains, the summit of the earth, the supporter of heaven and the axis which touches the pole."992

The true nature of the cosmic mount is evident in the Chinese symbolism of the king post. Mystic traditions defined the centre post of a roof (or the top of such a post) as the *Ki.* The chief upright (*Ki*) of the local dwelling symbolized the *Tai-Ki* or "Great Ki" in heaven, the central support of the turning Cosmos. The "Great Ki" was the god-king Shang-ti, dwelling upon the summit of the polar mount Kwen-lun.993

The Iranian counterpart of Meru was the cosmic mountain Hera Berezaiti, raised by Ahura Mazda. In the *Zend Avesta* this "bright mountain" appears as "the first mountain that rose up out of the earth."994

From this cosmic mountain the sun shone forth each day. "Up! rise up and roll along! thou swift-horsed sun, above Hera Berezaiti, and produce light for the world . . ."995 (Darmesteter's translation seems to suggest a

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983 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 400.

984 *Ibid.*, 400.

985 W. T. Warren, *op. cit.*, 146-47.

986 *Ibid.*, 143-44.

987 *Ibid.*, 128.

988 Massey, *Ancient Egypt*, 349.

989 Warren, *op. cit.*, 129.

990 *Ibid.*, 147.

991 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 521.

992 Nuttall, *Fundamental Principles of Old and New World Civilization*, 288.

993 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 226. O'Neill summarizes the Ki as follows: "Placed in the middle, it is (like the pivot, like the king, like the Pole star) the center and the Terminus; or like the upper point of the post of a house, which is the center, and supports all . . . The Ki, the supreme Pole, is the centre of the heavens and of the Earth. *Ibid.*, 520. Again, the "center" coincides with the "summit."

994 Darmesteter, *The Zend Avesta*, Part II, 175.

solar chariot ascending in the east to pass swiftly over the sky.) According to the *Bundahish* the "light rises up from Hera Berezaiti."[996]

Does the mountain, then, lie to the geographic east? It does not. The sun atop the mount is Mithra, "the lord of wide pastures, . . . sleepless, and ever awake; from whom the Maker Ahura Mazda has built up a dwelling on the Hera-Berezaiti, *the bright mountain around which the many stars revolve*, where come neither night nor darkness, no cold wind and no hot wind, no deathful sickness, no uncleanness made by the Daevas, and the clouds cannot reach up unto the Hera-Berezaiti."[997]

The polar character of the mount was not lost on Lenormant, who wrote: "Like the Meru of the Indians, Hera-Berezaiti is the pole and centre of the world, the fixed point around which the sun and the planets perform their revolutions."[998] Through the paradise at the zenith flowed the four directional rivers; and here was Ahura Mazda's "shining" abode, the "house of praise."[999]

So profoundly influenced were the Iranians by this primordial mountain that one encounters the same cosmic hill under numerous names. As reported by Lenormant, all the groups embodied by the race, "desiring to have their own Hera-Berezaiti," left commemorative sacred mountains in one location after another.[1000]

When the *Zend Avesta* speaks of "Mount Us-hindu, that stands in the middle of the sea,"[1001] one recognizes the same central mountain. The *Bundahish* describes the cosmic peak as "that which, being of ruby, of the substance of the sky, is in the midst of the wide formed ocean."[1002] Is this not the character of every Primeval Hill, rising to the *centre* of the cosmic sea?

The Iranians also called the cosmic mountain Taera (or Terak). In the *Pahlavi Texts* Taera appears as the "Centre of the World."[1003] And again, the central mount is the axis, for the *Zend Avesta* depicts the "holy Rasnu" resting "upon the Taera of the height Haraiti, around which the stars, the moon and the sun revolve."[1004]

On the cosmic mount lay the birthplace of the first ancestor. In the "centre of the earth" Gayomarth was born "radiant and tall," ruling upon the great hill as "king of the mountain."[1005] This world centre was the paradise Airan-vej, the Iranian Eden, and Gayomarth was the "first man." The most distinctive characteristic of this paradise was the great peak Kadad-i-Daitik, termed "the Centre of the Earth." And where was this primordial mountain at the centre of the world? It is identified as "the peak of judgement" atop Hera Berezaiti.[1006]

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995 *Ibid.*, Part I, 225, including note I.

996 West, *Bundahish XX*.

997 Darmesteter, *op. cit.*, Part II, 131-32. [Emphasis added.]

998 *Ararat and Eden*, 41.

999 Dresden, "Mythology of Ancient Iran," 359.

1000 *Les Origines*, Vol. I, 30*ff*.

1001 Darmesteter, *op. cit.*, Part II, 101.

1002 West, *op. cit.*, xii, 6.

1003 Warren, *op. cit.*, 243.

1004 Darmesteter, *op. cit.*, Part II 175.

1005 *Ibid.*, 33, note 1.

1006 Warren, *op. cit.*, 156-57.

Thus could the Manichaeans say with assurance, "The Primeval Man comes, then, from the world of the Pole Star."1007

Siberia

Among Altaic races one finds a well-preserved memory of the cosmic pillar. "The conception of a sky-supporting pillar reaches back among the Altaic race to a comparatively early period," states Uno Holmberg.1008 The consensus holds that the column rose to the stationary celestial pole. Among many tribes it was "the golden pillar." The Kirghis, Bashkirs, and other Siberian Tatar tribes recall it as "the iron pillar." To the Teleuts it was "the lone post" and to the Tungus-Orotshons, "the golden post."1009

Siberian myths describe the pillar as a great mountain, which the Mongols and Kalmucks call Sumur or Sumer and the Buriats Sumbur (closely related to the Hindu Meru or Sumeru). "In whatever form this mountain is imagined, it is connected always with the cosmography of these peoples, forming its centre . . . As far back as can be traced it has been a cosmological belief."

"Where, then, is the summit of this earth-mountain?" asks Uno Holmberg. "We might suppose it to be at the summit of Heaven, directly above us . . . It was not, however, envisaged thus, but instead its peak rises to the sky at the North Star where the axis of the sky is situated, and where, on the peak, the dwelling of the Over-god and his 'golden throne' are situated. To this idea points also the assumption, met everywhere in Asia, that the world mountain is in the north."1010

Siberian creation myths relate that the "high God" Ulgen, at the creation of the world, sat atop a "golden mountain."1011 The Siberians conceived the axle-pillar as the *centre post* to which the revolving celestial bodies were bound. Just as Egyptian texts termed the pillar the "Great Mooring Post" and the Sumerians denominated it the "binding post," Altaic races gave it the name "mighty tethering post." Nomads of Central Asia claim that their use of a post for tethering of their steeds imitates the gods, who fastened their horses to the heavens post. Certain Siberian Tatar tribes describe the cosmic pillar as a "golden horse post" raised in front of the gods' dwelling.1012

Altaic and Finno-Ugric tribes commemorated the world pillar through the sacrificial pillars erected in the centre of the village or as the centre-pole of the tent. The ritual post of the Lapps was *Veralden Tshould*—"the

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1007 Uno Holmberg, *Die Religiösen Vorstellungen der Altaischen Völker*, 80.

1008 *Siberian Mythology*, 333.

1009 *Ibid.*, 341.

1010 *Ibid.*, 342.

1011 Uno Holmberg, *Die Religiösen Vorstellungen*, 59.

1012 Uno Holmberg, *Siberian Mythology*, 337. Though the cosmic pillar is explicitly polar, the Siberians (like so many other races) connect it with the primeval "sun." The Ostiaks describe the celestial binding post as standing "on the side of the sun." Certain tribes deem the celestial pole the "Pillar of Gold," "the Pillar of Fire," or "the Pillar of the Sun." Eliade, *op. cit.*, 236.

Some traditions describe the binding post as made of iron. The Voguls recall "the holy iron pillar of god erected for the tethering of the holy animal with many-coloured thighs," while others often depict it as a shining "nail" serving as the axis and support of the cosmos. The Samoyeds, for example, speak of a polar "nail of the sky," "round which the heavens revolve." Uno Holmberg, *Siberian Mythology*, 221. Among the Finns and Lapps the conception of the world pillar as a golden nail was very common. Holzmayer describes the belief as follows: "In the middle of the sky, or in the north, the heavens are affixed to a nail in such a manner that they are able to revolve round the nail, the revolving causing the movement of the stars." This nail is at the same time conceived as the support or foundation of the sky. *Ibid.*

The Altaic "Nail of the North" was the axis of the world mill. The Ostiaks sang: "There is a mill which grinds by itself, and scatters the dust of a hundred versts away. And there is a golden pole with a golden cage on top which is also the Nail of the North." De Santillana and von Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill*, 96. We can now understand this mill as the ever-turning cosmic wheel supported by the "golden pole" or axis-pillar: (here).

pillar of the world"—and represented the lofty polar column.1013 Uno Holmberg reports that the wood post which supports the centre of the Altaic shaman's tent duplicates the cosmic character of the primeval pillar upholding heaven. In the magical rites the shaman ascends this post to reach the navel and summit of the world.

"In the middle of the world stands a pillar of birch wood, say the Yakuts."1014 The sacred pole, Holmberg reports, stood for the mountain of the navel.

Like so many other races, the Finns identify the navel with the summit, for they recall the origin of fire:

Over there at the navel of heaven

*On the peak of the famous mountain.*1015

On the cosmic mountain appeared the "first man," radiating light. Altaic and Finno-Ugric races as a whole regard this centre—the "stillest place"—as the site of the lost paradise, watered by four rivers, each associated with a different colour. Here, they claim, the "sun" never set beneath the horizon, and here the original race enjoyed a perpetual spring.1016

Greece And Rome

When the Greeks speak of Mount Olympus as the home of the gods, one customarily thinks of the famous Macedonian peak, the highest mountain in Greece. Yet numerous peaks in Greece and Asia Minor competed for the title "Olympus." Arcadia and Thessaly had their own Olympus, as did Laconia. Mountains in Attica, in Euboea, and in Skyros are still called Olympus today. Four different peaks of Mount Ida bore the name, while there was another Olympus in Galatia, another in Lydia, another in Lycia, another in Celicia. So also did Lesbos and Cyprus possess a sacred Olympus.

For an explanation of the many locations one must look to the cosmic prototype. Each hill entitled Olympus commemorated the original resting place of the great father Kronos (later Zeus), just as the hill which the Romans called the Capitoline symbolized the "Mount of Saturn."1017 Dionysius of Halicarnassus thus reports a complete assimilation of the Capitoline or Saturnian hill and the Greek Olympus or Mount Kronos.1018 Both hills signified the primordial mount on which the old god Saturn founded his celestial residence.

The mythical Olympus, which gave its name to so many sacred peaks, was the "wholly-shining" summit, the "aetherial" height or "burning sky." The author of the Platonic Epinomis refers to Olympus as "the Cosmos."1019

Plato tells us that Olympus was the omphalos or navel of the earth,1020 a fact of vital significance, since the Greeks knew the omphalos as the "axis."

1013 In one such wooden post described by Leem an iron nail was stuck in the top as an obvious symbol of the world nail. Uno Holmberg, *Siberian Mythology*, 221-22.

1014 Uno Holmberg, *Die Religiosen Vorstellungen*, 47-48.

1015 *Ibid.*, 62.

1016 *Ibid.*, 75-88.

1017 Lenormant, *Les Origines*, Vol. I, 146.

1018 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, I, 34; II, 1.

1019 Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, Vol. I, 101, 114-15.

1020 Plato, *Critias*, 120; Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, Vol. I, 146.

Moreover, the tradition of Olympus cannot be divorced from that of Ida, another mythical mountain possessing more than one localization. That Mount Ida bore the name Olympus and, like Olympus, was said to rise into the *aether*,[1021] reveals the underlying identity of the two heaven's pillars. Ida was the birthplace:

In the centre of the Sea *is the White Isle of Zeus*

There is Mount Ida, and our race's cradle.[1022]

So declares Aeneas. To anyone aware of the general tradition, this mountain in the middle of the sea can only be the primeval hill, the cosmic peak to which every race on earth traces its ancestry.

Also conceived as the centre of the world was the famous Mount Parnassus, from which, according to local myths, the human race descended. On the slope of Parnassus stood Delphi, Apollo's popular shrine, esteemed as "the navel." But here too we must look beyond the commemorative terrestrial mount to comprehend its symbolism. The mythical Parnassus is doubtless the same as the Sanskrit Parnasa, which the Hindu *Puranas* call *Meru*, the polar mountain.

One of those to perceive the Greek sacred mountain as the copy of the cosmic mount was Warren, who concluded: "Olympus was simply the Atlantean pillar [the "pillar of heaven"] pictured as a lofty mountain, and supporting the sky at its northern Pole. In fact, many writers now affirm that the Olympus of Greek mythology was simply the north polar 'World-mountain' of the Asiatic nations."[1023] But the point is only rarely acknowledged today, and most treatments of the subject still ask the Macedonian mount to explain its own mythical image.

Western Semitic

Mount Zion, the site of the ancient Hebrew temple, is a small hill in Jerusalem, between the Tyropoeon and Kedron valleys. The Hebrews frequently call Jerusalem itself "Zion."

But in the "last days," according to Isaiah (2:2), Zion "shall be exalted above the hills." This will be the new Jerusalem. The Book of Revelation, in reference to "a new heaven and a new earth," implies a transformation of the mount: "[An angel] carried me away in the spirit to a *great and high mountain*, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven."[1024] The verse suggests that in the order to come the celestial city will rest on a mountain reaching to heaven.

The concrete image of the *new* Jerusalem, however, is supplied by the memory of the *primordial* Jerusalem, founded at the creation. This was the mount on which Yahweh, or El, stood in the beginning. From the available evidence, one observes the following characteristics of the cosmic Zion:

1. *The mountain stood at the navel of the world.*[1025]

Thus, in the "creation," God fashioned the "earth" around Zion.[1026]

2. *The mountaintop was the world summit.*

Among the Hebrews, states Wensinck, "the sanctuary [Zion] has been considered as the highest mountain or the highest territory of the earth." This is, Wensinck adds, "the first character of the navel."[1027] (Every navel

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1021 Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 116.

1022 Quoted in Warren, *op. cit.*, 182. [Emphasis added.]

1023 *Ibid.*, 212.

1024 Revelation 21:10. [Emphasis added.]

1025 Wensinck, "*The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth*," 1-10.

1026 *Ibid.*, 16.

1027 *Ibid.*, 13.

marks the centre and summit.) Through assimilation with the cosmic Zion, the local hill acquires the imagery of the original.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion.[1028]

The phrase "beautiful for situation" (*yepeh nop*) has the concrete meaning of "towering superb" (Gaster's rendering of the phrase).[1029] Needless to say, the small hill in terrestrial Jerusalem did not supply this image.

3. *Zion lies in the farthest north.*

Mt. Zion, "thou far reaches of the North," an emperor's citadel.[1030]

Here the cosmic Zion is identified with the celestial Zaphon, the Mount of Congregation in the uttermost north. This is the mount from which Lucifer was cast down:

For thou [Lucifer] *hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:* I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north [Zaphon]. *I will ascend above the heights of clouds; I will be like the most High.*[1031]

Thus does God (as El, the Most High) reside on a great northern mountain, reaching the stars. Clifford tells us that "Zaphon's meaning seems to be practically 'heavens'."[1032] That Zion was synonymous with this cosmic mountain in the far north links the modest hill in Jerusalem with the polar mountain of global mythology.

4. *God appears as a radiant light atop Zion.*

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.[1033]

5. *The primeval temple (or city) rests on Zion.*

". . . The habitation of Yahweh on Zion is the earthly counterpart of the glorious mansion which, in traditional popular lore, the divine overlord is said to have built for himself on the supernal hill of the gods," writes Gaster.[1034]

6. *God resides* "*in*" *the cosmic Zion.*

The enclosure of God's dwelling (temple, city) is inseparable from the mountain on which it rests. Thus can the Psalm employ the phrase, "in the city of our God, *in* the mountain of his holiness."[1035] God's "dwelling place *in* Zion"[1036] is the enclosure of the summit.

7. *Zion is the site of Adam's paradise, the land of the four rivers.*

To the prince of Tyre (clearly the cosmic, not the terrestrial city) the Lord declares:

1028 Psalm 48: 1-2.

1029 Gaster, *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament*, 758.

1030 Psalm 48:2, as translated by Gaster, *op. cit.*, 758.

1031 Isaiah 14:13-14. [Emphasis added.]

1032 Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 162.

1033 Psalm 50: 2-3.

1034 To Come.

1035 Psalm 48:1. [Emphasis added.]

1036 Psalm 76:2. [Emphasis added.]

Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering . . . Thou wast upon the holy mountain *of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.*[1037]

In these lines the prince of the cosmic city appears in the character of Adam, enthroned amid the fiery stones of Eden. To occupy the primeval garden is to abide upon "the holy mountain of God."[1038] The point is noted by Wensinck: "Paradise really consists of a mountain higher than any mountain on earth . . . Paradise is also considered as a navel."[1039] That the mountain surpassed all terrestrial peaks simply means that it was cosmic, as was the paradise at the summit.

These characteristics of the heaven's peak in Hebrew tradition find additional confirmation in the closely related cosmic mountain of Canaanite myth. Zaphon in the far north appears repeatedly in the texts as the resting place of the high god Baal. "There are striking similarities between the mountain *spn* [Zaphon] in the Ugaritic texts and Mount Zion in the Hebrew Bible," writes Clifford. "On both the deity dwells in his temple from which he exercises his rule; thunder and lightning are frequently his means of disclosure; the mountain . . . is impregnable; it is connected with fertility; and it is a cosmic centre."[1040]

Noteworthy is "the mythic and cosmic dimension of the pillar or mountain. That is, it joins the upper and lower world; in it is contained a super abundance of life, of water; it is the throne of the deity."[1041] Just as the Hebrew Yahweh dwells *in* Zion, so does the Canaanite high god Baal dwell *in* the cosmic Zaphon:

In the midst *of my mountain, divine Zaphon,*

In the holy place, the mountain of my heritage,

In the chosen spot, on the hill of victory.[1042]

Baal is enthroned, yea (his) seat is the mountain . . .

In the midst *of his mountain, divine Zaphon . . .*

His head is wonderful.[1043]

It must be this cosmic hill depicted in a Phoenician ivory, reproduced by Clifford. The ivory (dated to the first millenium B.C.) shows a mountain personified as a male deity. The mountain-god holds in his hand a vase from which four streams flow in opposite directions.[1044] Issuing from the summit of the mount, the four rivers provide a distinct parallel to the four rivers of other traditions.

1037 Ezekiel 12: 13-15. [Emphasis added.]

1038 See also the *Book of Jubilees* 8:19.

1039 *Op. cit.*, 14.

1040 Clifford, *op. cit.*, 131.

1041 *Ibid.*, 97.

1042 *Ibid.*, 68. [Emphasis added.]

1043 *Ibid.*, 77. [Emphasis added.]

1044 *Ibid.* Complementing Hebrew traditions of Zion are the Muslim tales of the world mountain Kaf. According to the commentary of Tha'labi, "Allah created a large mountain of green emerald, from which the green colour of the sky is derived: it is called mount Kaf and it surrounds the whole earth." Wensinck, *op. cit.*, 5. The mount served as a stable support and enclosed the "world." This is exactly the image of the enclosed celestial earth forming the summit of the primeval hill: (here).

Muslim cosmology knows the holy city of Mecca as the summit of the worlds highest mountain. *Ibid.*, 12, 25. The throne of Allah on the mountaintop or world summit stood at the celestial pole. "The highest point and the center of heaven is the Polestar," states Wensinck. *Ibid.*, 47.

The Americas

"The ancient Mexicans," writes Warren, "conceived of the cradle of the human race as situated in the farthest North, upon the highest of mountains, cloud-surrounded, the residence of the god Tlaloc. Thence come the rains and all streams, for Tlaloc is the god of the water. The first man Quetzalcoatl, after having ruled as king of the Golden Age of Mexico, returned by divine direction to the primeval Paradise in the North (Tlapallan) and partook of the draught of immortality. The stupendous terraced pyramid-temple of Cholula was a copy and symbol of the sacred Paradise mountain of Aztec tradition, which was described as standing 'in the *Centre of the Middle-country.*'"[1045]

Called *Colhuacan*, Tlaloc's mountain was the site of the mythical homeland Atzlan, the "White Mountain" from which, according to the myths, the Mexicans descended.[1046] Resting on the summit of Colhuacan was the temple of Mixcoatl, "the god of the Pole Star."[1047] Though Mexican myths abound with references to the primordial "centre," one notes that (as stated by Sejourne) "the centre . . . is also the point where heaven and earth meet,"[1048] *i.e.*, it is "the world's highest point," the summit of the world mountain.

As an indication of the close correspondence between the Mexican paradisal mountain and that of other races, I cite the following Mixtec account of divine origins. The account relates that "the father and mother of all the gods" constructed a mansion upon a *great hill* while the world yet lay "in deep obscurity":

. . . When all was chaos and confusion,

the earth was covered with water,

there was only mud and slime on the surface of the earth.

At that time . . .

there became visible

a god who had the name 1-Deer

and the surname Snake of the Lion

and a goddess, very genteel and beautiful,

whose name was also 1-Deer

and whose surname was Snake of the Tiger.

These two gods are said to have been the beginning

of all other gods . . .

Western Semitic races claim that the creator dwelt in a celestial tent, reflected in imitative tents on earth. The central pole of the terrestrial tent corresponds to the world mountain. The Arabs called *the cosmic mountain* itself the "Central Pole of the Tent," while the Arabic name for the pole star, Al-rucaba, gave the Spanish *arrocabe*, "the kingpost of a roof." O'Neill, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 226.

The polar mount also finds symbolic expression in the Arabic minaret or "light house," a slender and lofty tower atached to a Muslim mosque. On the balcony of the minaret the muezzin calls the people to prayer. The worlds largest minaret is the Qutb Minar at Delhi, standing over 240 feet high and described by one observer as resembling "a cyclopean red telescope." *Ibid.*, 206-8. The Quth (of Qutb Minar) is, as we have seen, the "pole" or "axis" of the universe. The minaret—commemorating the axis-pillar—thus corresponds well with the sacred poles and pillars of other nations. (I earlier proposed that the prototype of the minaret was the Egyptian Mena-uret—the Great Mooring Post.)

1045 *Op. cit.*, 247. [Emphasis added.]

1046 Masey, *Ancient Egypt*, 588.

1047 Krickerberg, in *Pre-Columbian Religions*, 41; Fay Diego Duran, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 161, translator's footnote.

1048 Sejourne, *Burning Water*, 89.

As soon as these two gods became
visible on earth, in human form,
the accounts of our people relate
that with their power and wisdom
they made and established a large stone
on which they built a very sumptuous mansion,
constructed with the finest workmanship
which was their seat and residence on earth . . .
This large stone and the mansion
were on a very high hill,
near the village of Apoala . . .
This large stone was named
"the-place-where-the-heavens-were."
And there they remained many centuries
in complete tranquillity and contentment, as in a pleasant and delightful place . . .

The poem goes on to describe the planting of a garden of abundance on the mountaintop with—

flowers and roses
and trees and fruit
and many herbs
and in this way
began the Mixtec kingdom.[1049]

Here we have the god One ("1-Deer") appearing in the primeval waters and taking as his spouse the great mother. The appearance of the primal pair coincides with the fashioning of a mansion atop "a very high hill." That this was the cosmic mountain is clear from the reference to the "large stone" of foundation atop the hill: its name was "the-place-where-the-heavens-were" (it was not of our earth). With its garden of plenty, this home of the Mixtec pair offered "complete tranquillity and contentment." (Compare the Egyptian *Garden of Hetep*, whose very name conveys the dual meaning "rest" and "abundance.")

All nations look back to the god One as the first king and to the first generation of gods as the "ancestors." Thus the poem concludes: "in this way began the Mixtec kingdom."

A central mountain, identified with "the earth's navel," appears also in the myths of the Pima of the southwestern United States. From this mountain the world was populated.[1050] The Omaha commemorate the great rock which Wakanda summoned from the waters, at the beginning of the world:

. . . The great white rock,
Standing and reaching as high as the heavens, enwrapped in mist.
Verily as high as the heavens . . .[1051]

1049 Léon-Portilla, *Pre-Columbian Literatures of Mexico*, 56-57.

1050 Alexander, *North American Mythology*, 178.

1051 *Ibid.*, 107.

"The Indians, like the Semites," states Alexander, "conceived the world to be a mountain, rising from the waste of cosmic waters, and arched by the celestial dome."1052

The aborigines of Guiana know the great mountain Roraima, "ever-fertile source of streams." Surrounding this peak, the natives say, is "a magic circle." On the same mountain they recall an enormous serpent "which could entwine a hundred people in its folds."1053

In the Eskimo tradition, the upper or netherworld lies beyond a great mountain around which the celestial dome revolves. The land above this *axis-mountain* is said to resemble our earth.1054

Like other races, the American Indians represented the cosmic Mount by the centre-post of the sacred dwelling. Perhaps the most interesting version occurs in the Delaware symbolism of the "Big House," a ritual dwelling known to represent the primeval creation. Atop the centre-post of the Big House stood the effigy of the creator god Gicelemukaong. "The post on which his face appears represents him in his aspect as centre post of the universe, the supporter of the whole structure of creation," writes Muller.1055 The connection of this king-post with the Great Bear1056 proves its polar character, while the creator at the summit is without doubt the supreme polar god.

A Collective Memory

The myths and symbols of the cosmic mountain constitute a collective memory shared by all mankind. The Mount universally appears as the inaccessible height, attaining the centre of heaven. Around its summit revolves the circle of the Cosmos. In all principal accounts the Mount appears as the ancestral homeland—the lost paradise with its four rivers.

From one section of the world to another the ancients represented the primeval hill through sacred posts and pillars—the centre-posts of temples and other holy dwellings, or the free-standing columns holding aloft various emblems of the great god and his enclosure.

The pillar of light appearing to support the planet-god was "the earth's highest mountain." The god on the mountaintop seemed to occupy the summit of the terrestrial landscape, yet also appeared literally as the pivot around which all the heavenly bodies turned.

In other words, one can speak of the great father as ruling "on *our* earth" without reducing him to mere human proportions. The same figure ruled as the central sun.

It is to the cosmic mountain that one must refer in order to make sense of the commemorative hill or sacred column. Yet the priority of the cosmic peak is only rarely admitted by the experts.

Were the Greeks so unsophisticated as to believe that Kronos—acknowledged to be the planet Saturn—sat enthroned on a *local* Olympus? Did the Hebrews truly believe that Yahweh, at the creation, actually stood on the mound of earth which we now call Zion? (The truth is that in the age of epic poetry and fable, when the

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1052 *Ibid.*, 8.

1053 *Latin American Mythology*, 277.

1054 Alexander, *North American Mythology*, 8.

1055 In *Pre-Columbian Religions*, 163.

1056 *Ibid.*, 166. The Mexican national temple of Tlaloc and Vizilputzi (Tlaloc's brother) stood in the center of the city of Mexico, whence four causeways radiated in the four direction. "In the center of the temple stood a richly ornamented Pillar of peculiar sanctity," noted Warren, *op. cit.*, 247, note 1. Since the intersection of the crossroads symbolized the cosmic center and summit, the pillar clearly represented Tlaloc's celestial mountain at the navel of the world.

The center and capital of the Peruvian city of Cuzco stood at the intersection of four great highways running to the north, south, east, and west, each traversing one of the four provinces or vice-royalties into which Peru was divided. In the central temple was a circle and in the center of the circle stood a sacred pillar. *Ibid.*, note 2.

chroniclers confused the cosmic Olympus and Zion with their local representations, most educated men stopped believing the myths.)

The memory of the *cosmic* mountain existed prior to the naming of sacred hills on our earth or the fashioning of symbolic representations. Indeed, the point should go without saying. While Greek mythologists like to think that the Macedonian Olympus gave rise to myths of the Olympic home of the gods, surely no one would suggest that the towering obelisks, iron posts, or minarets were fashioned *before* men conceived the great god resting on such a support. The cosmic myth precedes and gives meaning to the symbol. Local mountain and sacred pillar share the same role as characterizations of a cosmic prototype.

Divorced from the prototype the symbol will always appear as an expression of gross ignorance. A good illustration of this is Cook's explanation of the Germanic sacred pillar Irminsaul, "the pillar of heaven." To the primitive, Cook tells us, "the sky stands in need of a visible support. Early man was in fact haunted by a very definite dread that it might collapse on him."

"How that belief arose, we can only surmise. It may be that in the dim past, when the ancestors of these tribes developed out of hunters into herdsmen and emerged from the forest on to the open plain, they missed the big tree that seemed to support the sky ('heaven-reaching' as Homer calls it). And in the absence of the mighty prop there was nothing to guarantee the safety of their roof [the sky]."

"Now early man was a practical person. His roof being insecure, he proceeded to shore it up."[1057]

One observer after another confuses the symbol with the prototype. Can one credibly suggest that primitives raised the sacred post because "they missed the big tree that seemed to support the sky"? Could the most ignorant savages have believed that the very piece of wood before them sustained the entire heavens so that a few blows of an ax would bring down the sun, moon, and stars?

A few comparative mythologists, noting the sacred mountain's connection with the world axis, seek to understand it as an astronomical metaphor: the ancients must have been so impressed by the visual revolution of the heavens around a central point—the celestial pole—that they conceived a great column supporting heaven at its pivot and constituting the fixed axle of the universe. These writers see the mountain as a primitive fiction employed to explain the regular and harmonious motions of the heavens.

But in the ancient world view, the cosmic axis-pillar belongs to an integrated vision and cannot be separated from other central themes. If the Mount was no more than a colourful metaphor for the cosmic axis, in what metaphor did the polar sun originate? Why was this stationary light called Saturn? And why do the hymns incessantly invoke a shining band around the god, or four primary rays of light radiating from this central sun? To explain the cosmic mount as an analogy drawn by primitive imagination, one must, in similar terms, account for the entire range of motifs attached to the signs and , the world-wide images of the mountain. Such a task would require abstractions far beyond any to which the ancients were accustomed.

While modern man looks for an explanation of the myths in the present heavens, the mythmakers themselves repeatedly tell us that they speak of a *vanished* world order. The cosmic mountain is the *Primeval* Hill; the garden at the summit is the *lost* paradise; and the central sun ruling the enclosure is the *banished* god-king. The entire drama set forth in archaic ritual takes place in a previous age, separated from our own by overwhelming catastrophes (a subject which must be reserved for treatment in a separate volume).

When the ancient priests invoke the "Mount of Glory," the "Jewelled Peak," the "pillar of fire," or the "golden mountain" they affirm the Mount as a visible and powerful apparition.

Moreover, one need only consider the diverse mythical forms of the Mount to discover a symbolism of such breadth and coherence as to refute any appeal to abstractions.

The Mount Of Masculine Power

1057 *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, 55-56.

Mythical history presents the cosmic mountain as the masculine power of the heavens, implanting the luminous "seed" (Saturn) within the womb of the mother goddess. The goddess, personifying the band around the central sun, thus becomes the "mistress of the mountain."

If the Egyptian Atum or Re is the Great Seed, the Mesopotamian Ninurta, or Ningirsu, is "the life giving Seed."[1058] The ritual declares the primal seed to have been generated by the world pillar. "My king Ningirsu . . . , trusty lord, Seed spawned by the Great Mountain," reads a Sumerian hymn.[1059] In the same vein the Egyptians conceived Re the "Seed" of the cosmic mountain Shu.

The mountain is the *generative* pillar and the great goddess its queen. Upon forming the great column in the waters of Kur, Ninurta addresses his wife Ninmah (a form of Ninhursag):

Therefore on the hill which I, the hero, have heaped up,

Let its name be Hursag (mountain), and thou be its queen.[1060]

Similarly, Ishtar, the "womb," is the spouse on the mountain:

O supreme mistress of the mountain of the universe.[1061]

The concrete meaning of the goddess' title will be observed in a Canaanite fragment referring to Ishtar and Mount Pisaisa: the mount *cohabits* with the goddess.[1062] The world mountain takes the form of the Ithyphallus, observes Jeremias.[1063]

Egyptian ritual invokes the mother goddess as the "Spouse on the Mountain,"[1064] while the great father becomes *An-mut-f*, "the pillar of his mother."[1065]

That the great goddess, as mistress or queen of the mountain, actually cohabits with it may not always be explicitly spelled out, though the relationship is often explicit in the symbolism of the Mount itself. The phallic dimension of the cosmic pillar is very clear in the Egyptian obelisk , symbol of the Primeval Hill supporting the Benben stone or "Seed" of Atum. According to Rouge, "A comparative study of these little monuments proves that the obelisk was revered because it was the symbol of Amen the generator . . . The obelisk passes insensibly from its ordinary form to that of the phallus."[1066]

The Egyptian and Mesopotamian conceptions of the world mountain as masculine power accord with Hindu symbolism of the cosmic mount Meru, deemed the male principle of the universe.[1067] Meru was, in fact, the

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1058 Kramer, *The Sacred Marriage Rite*, 54.

1059 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 257.

1060 Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 81.

1061 Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 399.

1062 Clifford, *op. cit.*, 30.

1063 "Der Ithyphallus, der auf der elamischen Vase realistisch dargestellt ist, entspricht in der mythischen Symbolik der Weltberg." Jeremias, *Handbuch der Altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, 24.

1064 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 115, note 1.

1065 *Ibid.*, 54.

1066 Quoted in O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 201.

1067 Faber, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 331.

famed *lingam* or phallus of Shiva, extending upward along the "axis of the universe."[1068] Reflecting this idea is the phrase "the virile mountain," employed by the *Atharva Veda*.[1069]

The "heavenly pillar" on which the Japanese pair Izangi and Izanami stood in the beginning[1070] was, according to the respected authority Hirata, at once the world axis and the lingam.[1071]

". . . Every mountain was deemed the phallus of the World, and every phallus or cone was an image of the holy mountain," observes Faber.[1072]

The phallic character of many sacred pillars is so widely acknowledged as to require little argument.[1073] Indeed, certain scholars are so impressed by this attribute of sacred pillars that they seek to build an entire interpretation of ancient ritual around the theme: every pillar and every related symbol becomes an expression of a primitive preoccupation with human reproduction—and nothing else.

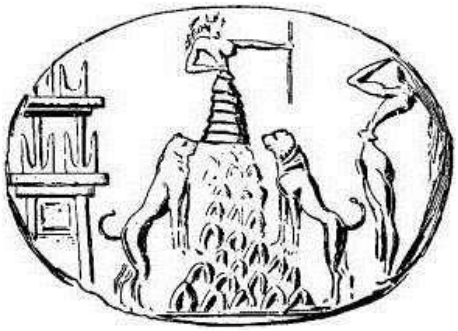

Figure 46. Cretan Mistress of the Mountain.

Yet in each instance, one sees the *prevailing* theme of the *cosmic* mountain. It is one thing to admit the masculine attribute of the pillar (among other attributes), but quite another thing to assert, as some do, that the pillar was initially nothing more than a masculine emblem. The cosmic mountain came first, and it was quite natural that the ancients, reflecting on the mountain's relation to the enclosed sun at the summit ( ), interpreted the entire configuration in masculine-feminine terms. Faber, after reviewing the global image of the holy mountain, concludes that in each case the mountain had on its summit a mystic circle given the name of the mother goddess and called "the Circle of the World." The "sun"-god, states Faber, resides within this enclosure as husband of the great mother, while the mountain itself is the organ of universal generation. (Unnoticed by Faber, however, is the connection of this universal cosmology with the sign .)

Those who assert the absolute priority of phallicism not only forget that the sacred pillar was cosmic from the start (*i.e.*, it was not a mere phallic emblem gradually enlarged to cosmic dimensions), but must gloss over the many independent attributes of the pillar and enclosure. (It would be absurd, for example, to argue that the mythical lost paradise—watered by four rivers running to the four corners—was the product of primitive phallicism.)

1068 Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*, 54-5; 66, note 15; 88, note 132.

1069 Whitney, *Atharva Veda*, 680.

1070 Philippi, *The Kojiki*, 50.

1071 *Ibid.*, 398-99, citing Hirata, *Pure Shinto*, 67.

1072 Faber, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, 203.

1073 *Ibid.*, 30*ff*., 201*ff*.

One interpretation of the polar configuration overlaps with another. But only the prototype explains the symbol.1074

The Cosmic Mountain Personified

The cosmic mountain often takes the mythical form of a great giant supporting the central sun or holding aloft the womb of the Cosmos. On other occasions the Mount becomes the lower limbs of the great god himself.

Of the heaven-sustaining giant, there is no more popular figure than the Greek Atlas. In modern imagination Atlas is the lonely god bearing our earth on his shoulders. But Hesiod surely speaks for the original version when he writes: "And Atlas through hard constraint upholds the wide heaven with unwearying head and arms, standing at the borders of the earth, before the clear-voiced Hesperides."1075 Pindar has Atlas "bearing up against heaven's weight,"1076 while Ovid speaks of "strong Atlas who wears heaven on his shoulders."1077 (The reader will recall that "heaven" means "the Cosmos.")

The usual view is that the Hesperides, in whose company Hesiod places Atlas, occupy a mysterious region either in Libya or in the far west. But Apollodorus, describing the eleventh labour of Hercules, relates that the golden apples guarded by the Hesperides "were not, as some have said, in Libya, but on Atlas, among the Hyperboreans."1078 This, of course, places Atlas in the far north, as noted by Frazer.1079

When Apollodorus uses the phrase "on Atlas," he refers to Atlas as the *mountain* on which Hera planted the garden of the gods.1080 The mythical Mount Atlas and heaven-sustaining god were synonymous, the myths declaring that Perseus petrified Atlas into the mountain.1081 Since there is a range of mountains in northwest Africa called Atlas many writers assume this to be the subject of the myth, but Apollodorus' location of the mount and garden among the far-northern Hyperboreans speaks for a quite different idea.

1074 The *cosmic mountain* was the masculine source of universal generation, a fact reflected in the pronounced phallic atributes of the mountain-god. Enlil, the Mesopotamian "great mountain," raises aloft the goddess Ninhursag, the "queen" of the cosmic hill, and implants the male "seed" (Saturn) within the celestial womb.

The Babylonian Bel (Canaanite Baal) receives the title "lord, the mightly mountain Bel." Allegro informs us that the god "derives his name from a Sumerian verb Al, 'bore,' which combined with a preformative element BA, gave words for 'drill' and 'penis' and gave Latin and us our word 'phallus.' *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*, 24. Bel, the "mighty mountain," was the generative pillar of the heavens. The phallic mountain was also the bore because it was the turning axle.

The Egyptian Shu, personifying the Light Mountain, is "lord of the Phallus" and appears in one text (*Pyramid Text* 642) to be equated with the male organ of Atum. More generally the pillar-god represents the phallus of Geb, brother and husband of Nut. Egyptian art depicts Shu standing on the recumbent Geb and supporting the curved and star-studded body of Nut with outstretched arms. Elsewhere, however, the artists replace Shu by the phallus of Geb. These illustrations, coming from the late period of Egyptian history, yet preserve a vital idea, whose origins will be found in the simple configuration (here). The identity of Shu, the heaven's pillar, with the phallus of Geb, illuminates these lines from the *Coffin Texts*: "As Geb I shall impregnate you [Nut] in your name of sky. I shall join the whole earth to you in every place. O high above the earth! You are supported upon your father Shu." Quoted in Clark, *op. cit.*, 49.

1075 Evelyn-White, *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, 117.

1076 Pindar, *Pythian Odes* iv, 289.

1077 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 168.

1078 Frazer, *Apollodorus*, II. V. II.

1079 *Ibid.*, 221, note 2.

1080 Hyginus, *Poetic Astronomy* ii. 3.

1081 Graves, *The Greek Myths*, 144.

To find the original character of Atlas, one must consult the global tradition, for this heaven-sustaining god has many counterparts around the world.

In India numerous gods appear as personifications of the world mountain. Agni is a "supporting column," or the "pillar of life,"[1082] a god who "upholds the sky by his efficacious spells,"[1083] and serves as the "axle" of the cosmic wheel or chariot.[1084] "Agni is represented as the axis of the Universe, extending as a pillar between Earth and Heaven," states Coomaraswamy.[1085]

Closely related is Indra, he "who is vast and self-sustained like a mountain, the radiant and formidable Indra."[1086] "Be thou just here; be not moved away; like a mountain, not unsteady; O Indra, stand thou fixed just here; here do thou maintain royalty."[1087]

Of Vishnu, Hindu ritual declares, "Thou proppedst asunder those two worlds, O Vishnu."[1088] Savitar is the axis-pillar of the world wheel: "All immortal things rest upon him as on the axle end of a chariot."[1089] And the *Upanishads* sing of Prajapati "By him the heavens are strong and earth is steadfast, by him light's realm and sky-vault are supported."[1090]

Hindu traditions of the heaven-sustaining god find a parallel in the cosmic image of the Buddha as "the golden mountain." Buddhist iconography presents the Buddha either as a pillar of fire or as the central sun atop such a pillar, which was the "axis of the Universe."[1091]

Among Altaic races the central pillar often receives personification as a towering figure supporting the heavens. The celestial column becomes "the Man-Pillar of Fire,"[1092] or "the iron pillar man."[1093] The Finnish supreme polar god was Ukko, invoked in the *Kalevala* with the words "O Ukko, god on high, supporter of the whole sky!"[1094]

Mithraic shrines depict Mithras in the form of Atlas, supporting the vault of heaven. "From the moment of his birth Mithras held the globe as *Kosmocrator* (ruler of the Cosmos)," states Cumont. "Atlas served to stress both the significance of Mithras' task as bearer of the heavens and the power derived from this junction."[1095] The

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1082 Oldenberg, *Vedic Hymns*, 49.

1083 *Ibid.*, 61.

1084 *Op. cit.*, 65.

1085 *Ibid.*, 10.

1086 *Rig Veda* V, 3, 160.

1087 Whitney, *op. cit.*, 347.

1088 Eggeling, *op. cit.*, III, 5, 3, 14.

1089 Campbell, *Oriental Mythology*, 208.

1090 Nikhilananda, *The Upanishands*, 18. We also saw that the Hindu *skambha*, or universe post, acquired the form of a cosmic giant sustaining the heavens. See here.

1091 Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*, 10; 68, note 30; see plates I and II; see also O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 194.

1092 Eliade, *op. cit.*, 239.

1093 Uno Holmberg, *Siberian Mythology*, 234-35.

1094 Lenrot, *The Kalevala*, 5.

1095 Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, 116.

Germanic Heimdall represented the turning axle-post of the heavens[1096] while the name of the Semitic god El has for its primitive sense "a column."

In North America, the divinity widely recognized in legend and myth by diverse Indian tribes was Manabozho, who "resides upon an immense piece of ice in the Northern Ocean," directing the cosmic movements. One of the forms of Manabozho was Ta-ren-ya-wa-go, "the holder of the Heavens."[1097] The assimilation of the great god to the cosmic mountain on which he rests will explain why, in the language of ancient astronomy, Saturn is the "pillar." The connection bears on an enigmatic reference to Saturn in the Old Testament. The prophet Amos charges Israel with having "borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun, your images, the star of your god."[1098] The term *Chiun* refers to the "pillar" or "pedestal" of the star-god worshipped by the Israelites in the desert. It is the name of the planet Saturn and traces back to the Babylonian *Kaiun*, also Saturn—the "steady star upon a foundation." Plutarch gives the title *Kiun* to the Egyptian Anup, the "god who is on his pole." *Kiun*, states Massey, "denotes the highest point, at the centre, and is applied to the founding of the world. *The name was assigned to Saturn as the god in the highest.*"[1099]

Saturn, the Heaven Man, thus acquires the form of a cosmic giant, whose vast trunk is the mountain of the world. *The sign* *offers us a picture of the Kosmocrator, the all-containing being embracing the male and female powers and supporting the Cosmos.*

Moreover, this connection of the supreme god to the cosmic pillar provides a further refutation of the common view which has the god, as our sun, *leave the mountain each morning* and soar across the sky to sink below the western horizon. It is the mountain that gives the god his identity as the supporter of the heavens. Could one reasonably call the mount the god's *lower limbs* if the sun were joined to the mount only at the moment of sunrise? The true light god does not move, but remains fixed at the summit.

The Single Leg

Reflecting the assimilation of the great god to the cosmic mountain is the repeated characterization of the Mount as the god's single "leg."

The ancient Mayans knew no greater god than Huracan, "the Heart of Heaven." In the *Popul Vuh*, the sacred book of the Quiche Maya, Huracan presides over the creation, bringing forth the first dawn.[1100] The name *Huracan* means literally "One-Leg." Goetz and Morley render his name as "flash of a leg or the lightning."[1101]

Did the single leg of Huracan derive from a bolt of lightning? We can answer the question by looking at other one-legged gods, of which world mythology presents a surprising number. Huracan's counterpart in Nahuatl ritual was the polar god Tezcatlipoca, who also possessed a single leg. And the same people worshipped Huitzilopochtli:

> *Portentous one, who inhabits the region of clouds, you have but one foot.*[1102]

1096 De Santillana and von Dechend, *op. cit.*, 158-59.

1097 Emerson, *Indian Myths*, 338-39, 438. Atlas was *the cosmic mountain* personified. Thus both Euripides and Aristotle relate the pillar of Atlas to the world axis. Warren comments: "The upright axis of the world is often poetically conceived of as a majestic pillar, supporting the heavens and furnishing the pivot on which they revolve." *Op. cit.*, 122.

1098 Amos 5:26.

1099 *Ancient Egypt*, 670. [Emphasis added.]

1100 Goetz and Morley, *Popul Vuh*, 81-84.

1101 *Ibid.*, 82, note 7.

1102 Léon-Portilla, *op. cit.*, 65.

Similarly, the Lillooet Indians of British Columbia recall an old thunder god who stood on one leg.1103

Looking beyond the Americas one finds that the natives of Australia remember a one-legged god Turunbulun, who also possessed a *single eye.*1104 This peculiarity, in turn, reminds one of the ominous figure met by Owein in the Arthurian legend: coming to a clearing in the forest, Owein encountered a large mound on which stood a black, *one-eyed, one-legged giant.*1105

The Celtic Sol stood on one foot all day.1106 The African Wachoga tell of the old god Mrule who resided on earth for a time before departing because of human unkindness; the god had only one leg.1107 O'Neill notes that a bronze statue of a Cabirean god of the Medici *lararium* stood on one foot.1108 Russian myth presents the demonic Verlioka as a one-eyed and one-legged figure.1109 So also was the Chinese primeval god K'uei one-footed.1110

That more than one of these figures possesses a single eye in addition to one leg is surely the key to a solution.

The Cyclopean eye answered to the enclosed polar sun , which the myths place on the world pillar . Does not the latter image offer us the simplest and most direct explanation of the one-eyed, one-legged god?

The decisive evidence comes from Egypt and India. In language which Egyptologists rarely attempt to comprehend, Egyptian texts speak of the "leg" or "thigh" of Osiris, Set, or Ptah. While the female "thigh" was the lap (womb) of the great mother, Egyptian texts similarly show that the *masculine* "thigh" or "leg" was the cosmic mountain. While numerous texts depict the god shining over the Light Mountain, the god Osiris is said to "shine above the Leg of heaven."1111 "Hail, Leg of fire, who comest forth from Akhekhu" proclaims the *Book of the Dead.*1112

The Egyptian *sept*, written with the mountain symbol , means "provide with." But *sept* also means "leg." Massey's conclusion must be our own: "The leg or thigh was an Egyptian figure of the pole, as we find it in 'the leg of Ptah' . . . Hence, 'above the leg' is equivalent to 'over the pole.'"1113 Kees tells us that the leg of Set, from which the "Nile" was said to flow, represented the pole.1114

1103 Harris, *Boanerges*, 33.

1104 Coomaraswamy and Mivedita, *Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists*, 388.

1105 Rhys, *Arthurian Legend*, 594.

1106 MacCulloch, *Celtic Mythology*, 190.

1107 Werner, *African Mythology*, 138.

1108 *Op. cit.*, 214.

1109 *Ibid.*, 216.

1110 Bodde, "Myths of Ancient China," in Kramer, *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, 374-76.

1111 Budge, *The Papyrus of Ani*, 118.

1112 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 370.

1113 *Ancient Egypt*, 311.

1114 Cited in Neumann, *The Great Mother*, 224.

The one-legged god appears to be represented in the Egyptian hieroglyph *ab* , for the determinative seems to depict a figure turning round while standing on one leg. At least this is the motion suggested by the word's sense "to go round." That *ab* ( ) also means "heart" suggests that the one-legged god is the stationary but ever-turning *heart of heaven*—the Egyptian counterpart of the one-legged Mayan god Huracan, the "Heart of Heaven."

We can test this interpretation against Hindu symbolism. Hindu legends say that the old god Manu, the "king of men" (the first man and the first king), "did arduous penance for ten thousand years"—all the while "*poised on one leg.*"1115 The great father Shiva not only endured "heavy penances on Mount Himavant," but "stood on one foot for a thousand years."1116 In the *Upanishads* one reads that the "Brahman is only one-footed."1117

The great god's one foot reinforces the principle of "rest", "Meditation," or "penance." A case in point is the archaic figure of Aja Ekapad, called the "one-footed" support of the Cosmos.1118 Agrawala tells us that "ekapad or one-footed denotes the absence of motion." The one-footed god "was devoid of any motion and represented the principle of Absolute Static Rest."1119

On the meaning of the great god's single leg, Coomaraswamy and Nivedita write: "The earliest of male anthropomorphic gods is said to have been Pole-star, and there is a touch of humour in the way he is portrayed up and down the pages of ancient mythology. The Pole-star, it seems, from his solitary position at the apex of the stellar system gave rise to the notion of a god who was one-footed . . . Thus the *Rig-Veda* contains numerous references to Aja-Ekapad—a name that may be translated either the One-footed Goat or the Birthless One-footed One."1120

The Hindus knew the celestial pole as *Dhruva-lok* or "place of Dhruva," (the "firm" god).1121 In the *Bhagavata-purana*, one reads that Dhruva, god of the pole, in profound meditation, "maintained himself upright on one foot, motionless as a *stake.*"1122 (In truth, the one leg of the motionless Dhruva *was* a "stake"—the central pillar or mountain of the world.)

1115 Suryakanta, *The Flood Legend in Sanskit Literature*, 4. [Emphasis added.]

1116 Keith, *Indian Mythology*, 113.

1117 Nikhilanda, *op. cit.*, 221*ff.*

1118 Schwabe, *Archetype und Tierkreis*, 34.

1119 Agrawala, *op. cit.*, 41, 70. Yet strangely, while observing the connection of the one foot and motionlessness, Agrawala never mentions the celestial pole—and even more strangely, he identifies Aja Ekapad as the solar orb (page 42).

1120 Coomaraswamy and Nivedita, *op. cit.*, 388-89.

1121 *Ibid.*, 378.

1122 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 501. [Emphasis added.] The identity of the single leg as the world pillar finds additional confirmation in the symbolism of sacred structures, mythical and historical. In the Japanese *Kojiki* the mythical emperor Jimmu encounters a palace which appears to rest on a central post. Chamberlain renders the description as "a palace which could be entered with one stride." But the most literal translation, according to Chamberlain, would be "a one-foot-rising palace." As is so often the case the literal rendering is superior to that chosen by the translators. That the palace rises on a single foot or leg is confirmed by the Nihongi reference to the same palace: here, instead of *ashi*, "foot," we have *hashira*, "pillar." The native commentators seem to agree that the single pillar supported the whole weight of the palace, observes O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 224.

That the polar god rules the world while standing on one leg throws light on the Siamese ritual in which the king, in imitation of the Universal Monarch, and in order to prove his fitness for holding supreme authority, stood on one leg.[1123] One thinks of the Greek purification rites which required initiates to stand on one foot only.[1124] The practice of praying on one leg occurs also in old Jewish rites in Jerusalem and among Muslim dervishes and Hindu hermits.[1125] It would be useless to seek a "natural" explanation for the practice, for the prototype does not lie in what we call the natural world today. Emulated is the feat of the Universal Monarch or first ancestor, conceived as the Ideal Man. "He who has one foot has out-stripped them that have two," states the *Rig Veda.*[1126] The statement derives meaning from the supremacy of the one-legged polar god, who, while standing fixed at the cosmic centre yet moved the turning heavens. The great god's single "leg" means the world mountain.[1127]

The Serpent/Dragon

The serpent fills more than one role in the myths of beginnings. While the circular serpent denotes the Saturnian enclosure, there is also a masculine serpent who serves as the foundation or pillar.

A comparison of global traditions indicates that while many legends locate the celestial "earth" on the cosmic mountain, this enclosure may also appear as the crown of an erect serpent. In the beginning, according to a creation myth of southeastern Borneo, there was only the sky and the sea, "in which swam a great serpent upon whose head was a crown of gold set with a shining stone. From the sky-world the deity threw earth upon the serpent's head, thus building an island in the midst of the sea; and this island became the world."[1128]

The Battak of Sumatra say that in the "primeval ocean swam or lay a great serpent on whose head the heavenly maiden spread a handful of earth . . . and thus she formed the world."[1129]

In Hindu myth the gigantic serpent Shesha sustains the "world" on his head,[1130] as do the Hebrew Leviathan and the Muslim cosmic serpents. Among the Buriats of Siberia, the tradition prevails that the mighty Ulgen created a giant fish amid the cosmic waters to support the "world."[1131]

1123 Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. I, 230.

1124 Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 422.

1125 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 230. This leads us to the suggestion that the fabulous polar mountain of Meru must in some sense have been the leg or thigh of the great god. There is a well-known classical tradition that Zeus gave birth to Dionysus from his "thigh" (which reminds us of the Egyptian god-king issuing from the cosmic "leg"). The Greek "thigh" is *meros*, and the Greek Mount Meros was equivalent to the Hindu Meru, the starting point of creation and mythical birthplace of gods and man. Birth from the leg or thigh is equivalent to cosmic birth atop the mountain of the world. (We must remember that the feminine "thigh" or womb composed the summit of the mount or leg and thus an inseparable part of the androgynous Heaven Man.)

1126 Coomaraswamy and Nivedita, *op. cit.*, 388.

1127 Perceiving the influence of astral symbolism, O'Neill recognized the leg-pillar as the polar axis. "In Mailduins Voyage he came to an island called Aenchoss, that is One-foot, so called because it was supported by a single pillar in the middle . . . ," reports O'Neill. A curious form of the palace on one foot occurs in a Russian tale, relating how four heroes who are wandering about the world come to a dense forest in which an izba or hut twirls round on a fowl's leg. "The youngest, prince Ivan (our Jack) makes it revolve with the magic word Izbushka. This supplies the idea of cosmic rotation which is absent in the Japanese myth." O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 225. The mythical dwelling raised on a single leg echoes a cosmic tradition. No one has even seen, on our earth, an island supported by a pillar or leg—or a house revolving on a leg. The leg was the central pillar seeming to sustain the primeval sun's cosmic dwelling.

1128 Dixon, *Oceanic Mythology*, 159-60.

1129 *Ibid.*, 161.

1130 Coomaraswamy, "The Symbolism of the Dome," 19.

1131 Uno Holmberg, *Siberian Mythology*, 310.

Is there an underlying consistency between these myths and other myths which depict the celestial earth as the summit of the world mountain? What is the connection of the serpent/dragon and the axis-pillar?

Of course, it is easy to imagine that a stream of ice or debris stretching between the Earth and Saturn would, before the latter orb attained stability at the polar centre, take on a twisting, serpentine appearance. And, in fact, the cosmic mountain in many creation epics is presented as a churning, serpentine column rising along the world axis and finally achieving stability. (I intend to explore this churning mountain in a subsequent volume).

Here is a fact which linguists and comparative mythologists overlook: in several lands the word for "mountain" is the same as the word for "serpent" or "dragon," though our natural world offers no basis for the equivalence. In Mexico, Nahuatl can mean "serpent" but also "mountain,"[1132] so that one might term the polar Mount Colhuacan a cosmic "serpent-mountain." "Serpent-Mountain" is indeed the title of the Mexican primeval hill Coatepelt.[1133]

The Egyptian Set is the primordial serpent or dragon, but *set* also means "mountain." The mythical Mountain of Set, in fact, is the acknowledged Egyptian counterpart of the Hebrew Zaphon in "the farthest reaches of the north."[1134] And like the Mexicans, the Egyptians knew the "Serpent Mountain," a figure of the pole, according to Massey.[1135]

The ancient Sumerian dragon in the cosmic sea was the *Kur*, playing a prominent role in the creation myth, but *kur* also possessed the meaning "mountain"; indeed, "the sign used for it is actually a pictograph representing a mountain."[1136] The Greek *Boreas* is the primeval serpent raised from the waters of Chaos, but etymologists connect the serpent-god's name with a primitive *bora*, "mountain."

"Among primitive peoples," writes Suhr, "there are signs of the column in the form of a python or dragon riding from the level of the earth to the clouds."[1137] Suhr notes several Chinese paintings "in which a dragon is represented as rising from the water of the earth."[1138] "A dragon ascending from the earth to the clouds can serve as the whirling column—which no doubt accounts for so many dragons on pillars."[1139] In northern Australia ceremonies of the Murngin commemorate with a central pole the great python who "rises up from a pool" and "towers up to the level of the clouds . . ." The python was the central pillar of heaven.[1140]

Only the identity of the world pillar and erect serpent/dragon can explain the primitive habit of decorating commemorative pillars with scales. The shaft of early Jupiter columns "was often patterned with scales," notes Cook.[1141] In both Egypt and Mesopotamia images of sacred mountains reveal a scaled pattern.

Since the great god often unites with the Mount in such a way that it becomes his lower limbs, we need look no further for an explanation of the great father's universal serpentine character: the erect serpent/dragon formed

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1132 Nuttall, *op. cit.*, 262-63.

1133 Krickerberg, in *Pre-Columbian American Religions*, 47.

1134 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 249.

1135 *Ancient Egypt*, 304.

1136 Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 76.

1137 *Before Olympos*, 81.

1138 *Ibid.*, 87.

1139 *Ibid.*, 85.

1140 *Ibid.*, 84. Sacred pillars claimed to have been fashioned by the companions of Quetzalcoatl also received the form of serpents, as did sacred pillars in Ireland. O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 378.

1141 *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, 89.

the god's pillar-like trunk. Describing Ningirsu as "like heaven his tremendous size," a Sumerian text calls this creator god a "Flood-demon [*i.e.*, dragon] by his lower limbs."1142 "Your hinderparts are the Celestial Serpent," declares the Egyptian *Pyramid Texts.*1143 The idea is vividly expressed by the illustration of the African god Ammon reproduced by Cook: the head and shoulders of the god melt into a pillar-trunk formed by the body of a serpent.1144 (fig. 47) Babylonian cylinder seals show the high god wearing a robe or dress in the form of a mountain.1145 Typically, the mountain-dress is covered with scales, identifying it with the serpent/dragon.

Serpentine lower limbs of divine figures are, of course, common to the art of many peoples. Indeed it would be useless to attempt a review of all the creator gods joined with the serpent/dragon, since no prominent figure of the great father appears to have escaped this identification, even if at times subdued. The unanswered question is, Why? The last thing suggested (to us) by slithering serpents is the idea of a creator! Yet the prototypical identity of the erect serpent/dragon and the cosmic mountain gives striking coherence to the symbolism and places the world-wide union of creator and serpent above grotesque and inexplicable coincidence.

Figure 47. Ammon, with serpentine trunk.

An equally bizarre feature of the mythic serpent is its phallic powers, as documented by Crawley, Hartland, Briffault, Eliade, and others. Here is Eliade's summary of the theme: "Even today it is said in the Abruzzi that the serpent copulates with all women. The Greeks and Romans also believed it. Alexander the Great's mother, Olympia, played with snakes. The famous Aratus of Sicyon was said to be a son of Aesculapius because, according to Pausanias, his mother conceived him of a serpent. Suetonius and Dio Cassius tell how the mother of Augustus conceived from the embrace of a serpent in Apollo's temple. A similar legend was current about the elder Scipio. In Germany, France, Portugal and elsewhere, women used to be afraid that a snake would slip into their mouths when they were asleep, and they would become pregnant, particularly during menstruation. In India, when women wanted to have children, they adored a cobra. All over the East it was believed that woman's first sexual contact was with a snake, at puberty or during menstruation. The Komati tribe in the Mysore province of India uses snakes made of stone in a rite to bring about the fertility of women. Claudius Aelianus declares that the Hebrews believed that snakes mated with unmarried girls; and we also find this belief in Japan. A Persian tradition says that after the first woman had been seduced by the serpent she immediately began to menstruate. And it was said by the rabbis that menstruation was the result of Eve's relations with the serpent in the Garden of Eden. In Abyssinia it was thought that girls were in danger of being raped by snakes until they were married. One Algerian story tells how a snake escaped when no one was

1142 D'Alviella, *The Migration of Symbols*, 29.

1143 *Pyramid Text* 2128.

1144 Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 359.

1145 Hans Henning Van Der Osten, *Ancient Oriental Seals in the Collection of Mr. Edward T. Newell*, 113.

looking and raped all the unmarried girls in a house. Similar traditions are to be found among the Mandi Hottentots of East Africa, in Sierra Leone and elsewhere."1146

No extent of conventional rationalization could hope to explain this pervasive superstition. The supposed masculine power of serpents echoes an age-old tradition, whose original subject was the *cosmic* serpent, not the lowly serpents of our earth. The impregnating serpent was a creature of myth, his phallic power deriving from his identity with the engendering mountain of the world. The primeval serpent, often regarded as the male organ of the great father himself, rose along the world axis. That this archetypal memory produced reverberations in global folklore for thousands of years attests to the dramatic power of the original experience.

The Stream Of Life

The cosmic mountain also found expression as a stream of wind or water either descending from the polar abode or ascending the world axis from "*below.*" *As a stream of air it was the life-giving* "*breath*" *of the great father, often called the* "*North Wind.*" *As a river it was the central stream in which the ancients believed all the waters of the world to originate—or a well, fountain, or spring channeling the waters of the deep upward along the world axis to be dispersed in four streams flowing to the four corners of the celestial abode* .

Boreas And The Hyperboreans

The Pelasgian Boreas or Ophion is an archaic, serpentine god whom pre-Hellenic Greeks apparently revered as the father of creation. Graves reconstructs the fragments of the myth:

"In the beginning, Eurynome, the Goddess of All Things, rose naked from Chaos, but found nothing substantial for her feet to rest upon and therefore divided the sea from the sky, dancing lonely upon its waves. She danced towards the south, and the wind set in motion behind her something new and apart with which to begin a work of creation. Wheeling about, she caught hold of this north wind, rubbed it between her hands and behold! the great serpent Ophion. Eurynome danced to warm herself, wildly, until Ophion, grown lustful, coiled about those divine limbs and moved to couple with her. Now the North Wind, who is called Boreas, fertilizes; which is why mares often turn their hindquarters to the wind and breed foals without aid of a stallion. So Eurynome was likewise got with child."1147

As to the origins of Boreas, Graves can only say that he "is the serpent demiurge of Hebrew and Egyptian myth," from whom the Pelasgians claimed to have descended. But questions come immediately to mind. Why was Boreas, the *Pelor* or "prodigious serpent," called the "North Wind"? Why was this wind, like the erect serpent, believed to bring about conception?

Boreas, the North Wind, figures in a long-standing debate concerning the Hyperboreans, the servants of *boreal* Apollo. Ancient chroniclers unanimously agree that the *Hyper*boreans lived *beyond* or *above* Boreas, taking this to mean "beyond the North Wind," or in the farthest north. But certain modern etymologists contend that the classical interpretation rests on a confusion of terms: these critics connect Boreas and the Hyperboreans not with the "North Wind," but with a primitive Greek word, *bora*, meaning "mountain." Bora is the name of a mountain in Macedonia, the highest peak between the Haliakmon and Axios rivers. Under this modern interpretation Boreas is simply "the wind of the mountain."

By such reasoning *boreal* Apollo becomes the god of a local peak, and Apollo's servants (the Hyperboreans) become either divine assistants *above* this mount or human worshippers *beyond* the mount. The classical identification of Boreas and the Hyperboreans with the utmost north loses its long-standing validity.1148

1146 *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 165-66.

1147 *Op. cit.*, 27.

1148 Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 494; Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods*, 78.

Yet to accept the primitive identity of Boreas with the *bora* or "mountain" does not require one to concede that Bora or Boreas originated in reference to a *Macedonian* peak. If we focus on prototypes rather than local geography we see that Boreas pertained to *both* the "mountain" *and* the "North Wind"—but the original reference was cosmic. The "North Wind" was the luminous "breath" of the polar god, stretching along the world axis; and this very stream received mythical interpretation as the world mountain (the true Bora in heaven).

The North Wind Shu

A widely overlooked fact is that the world's oldest ritual designates the celestial pillar as "the breath of life."

The Egyptians, as previously observed, personified the Mount of Glory as the heaven-sustaining giant Shu. Yet Egyptologists as a whole rarely think of the god in such concrete terms. Budge writes: "Shu was a god who was connected with the heat and dryness of sunlight and with the dry atmosphere which exists between the earth and the sky."[1149] It is hard to imagine any link between "the dry atmosphere" and the god whom the Egyptians regularly depicted as a cosmic pillar holding aloft the goddess Nut, the womb of heaven.

But Budge remarks, almost incidentally, that Shu "was a personification of the wind of the North." Or again: "He was certainly, like his father Tem, thought to be the cool wind of the North."[1150] Budge's language seems to describe a transitory breeze from Lower Egypt. If the god personified such an ephemeral force, why did he receive explicit representation as the pillar of the heavens? The answer is that the "North Wind" did not refer to a terrestrial breeze but to the *visible* "breath" of Atum, the "firm Heart of the Sky" at the celestial pole. More than once the *Book of the Dead* speaks of "the north wind which cometh forth from Tem [Atum]."[1151] "I have come to protect thee, Osiris, with the North Wind which cometh forth from Tem," states one hymn.[1152] Elsewhere the wind issues from Atum-Re in conjunction with the mother goddess: "Let me snuff the air which cometh forth from thy nostrils, and the north wind which cometh forth from thy mother [Nut]."[1153]

The texts leave no doubt that this "wind" or "breath," descending from Atum (or Re), was the light pillar Shu: ". . . He breatheth and the god Shu cometh into being," states one hymn.[1154] "Thou art established upon that which emanateth from thy existence," states another.[1155] "Thou hast emitted Shu and he hath come forth from thy mouth."[1156] One text describes the god as "a great column of air" holding aloft the womb of Nut.[1157] In the *Pyramid Texts* the "north wind" is described as "smoke" and said to "lift up" the god-king.[1158] Clearly, the Egyptians conceived the stream of breath as a *visible pillar.*

Rather than "air" I should call this life-bearing breath "ether." While many sources describe the wind descending from the mouth or nostrils of Atum or Re, others view it as rising from "below" to vivify the god and his company of celestial spirits. "O thou Re, who dwellest in thy divine shrine, draw thou into thyself the

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1149 *Gods*, Vol. II, 87.

1150 *Ibid.*, 91.

1151 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 625.

1152 *Ibid.*, 503.

1153 *Ibid.*, 65.

1154 *Ibid.*, 391.

1155 *Ibid.*, 373.

1156 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 90.

1157 Hassan, *Hymnes Religieux du Moyen Empire*.

1158 *Pyramid Texts* 277, 1551.

winds, inhale the North Wind."[1159] This wind is the "sweet air for thy nose."[1160] "The sweet wind of the North is for thy heart."[1161] The deceased king aspires to attain the cosmic domain of the great god: "I will take for myself my breath of life . . . I will snuff the wind for myself, I will have abundance of the north wind, I will be content among the gods."[1162]

Actually, the Egyptians left for us a very expressive image of this life-bearing ether in the hieroglyph , depicting luminous streams of *khu*, "glory," rising to the enclosed sun. And the relationship of Shu, the heavens pillar, to this stream is beyond dispute. For the hieroglyph appears as the *determinative* in the name of Shu . Shu, the pillar bearing aloft the womb of the mother goddess, was no terrestrial breeze, but rather the visible North Wind flowing in a brilliant stream between our earth and Saturn's Cosmos.

This very connection of the polar mount and the breath of life prevails also in Mesopotamia. One text states that the cosmic mountain on which the Sumerian Ningirsu (Saturn) resides is the *dwelling place of the North Wind*:

To the mountain where the North Wind dwells,

I [Ningirsu] *have set my foot.*

The man of immense strength, the North Wind,

From the mountain, the pure place,

Will blow the wind straight towards you.[1163]

The text calls this North Wind "the breath of life to the people."

The Sumerians personified the cosmic mountain as the giant Enlil ("the great mountain"), a striking counterpart to the Egyptian pillar-god Shu. Like Shu, Enlil is the "Wind of the Netherworld Mountain"—that is, he personifies at once the cosmic hill and the breath of the creator. "Between heaven and earth the Sumerians recognized a substance which they called *lil* [in En*lil*], a word whose approximate meaning is wind (air, breath, spirit)," states Kramer.[1164] Enlil thus represents the ethereal column joining heaven and earth.

And the Hindu Agni, the pillar of heaven, was the same stream of air, or "smoke": "He (Agni) as a pillar of smoke upholds the heavens."[1165] The *Rig Veda* says, "Agni, even as it were a builder, hath lifted up on high his splendour" (compare Shu holding aloft the circle of *khu*, "glory"). "His smoke, yea, holdeth up the sky . . . a standard as it were the pillar of sacrifice, firmly planted and duly chrismed."[1166]

1159 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 401.

1160 *Ibid.*, 625.

1161 Piankoff, *The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 115.

1162 *Pyramid Text* 1158.

1163 Kramer, *Sacred Marriage Rite*, 32.

1164 *From the Tablets of Sumer*, 72.

1165 Coomaraswamy, *A New Approach to the Vedas*, 96, note 92b.

1166 Coomaraswamy, "Symbolism of the Dome," 35, citing *Rig Veda* IV, 6, 2-3.

The *Upanishads* thus declare: "The Breath-of-Life is a pillar."[1167] Both the Hebrews and Muslims claimed that the created earth rested on "the wind,"[1168] that is, the primeval *wind* and the primeval *foundation* were one and the same thing.

We return, then, to the Greek Boreas. In exploring the question of Boreas and the Hyperboreans, can one ignore the archaic identity of the cosmic mountain and North Wind? Once we acknowledge this identity, the question as to whether Boreas received his name from the North Wind or from the *bora* ("mountain") becomes meaningless: the North Wind *was* the mountain. And Boreas' serpentine form corresponds to the original form of the Mount in both Mesopotamia and Egypt. Moreover, the myth of Boreas impregnating the mother goddess—which gave rise to the later belief that the wind brings about conception[1169]—agrees with the universal character of the cosmic pillar: it is the engendering mountain of heaven.

The River Of Life

Ancient ritual also celebrates a stream of *water* either descending from on high or welling up from the deep as a central fount, spring, or well bringing life to the celestial abode.

In Egypt the heaven-sustaining giant Shu—the ethereal pillar of the North Wind—also represents the descending or ascending river. Shu is the "waterway," while the polar god "is established upon the watery supports of the god Shu." Egyptian creation tales describe the pillar-god as the emission of the polar Atum or Re. Shu is "poured" or "spit" from the mouth of the ruling divinity. "What flowed from thee became Shu,"[1170] states a hymn to Amen-Re.[1171] "You are the eldest son of Atum, his first-born; Atum has spat you from his mouth in your name of Shu."[1172]

"Thou hast emitted Shu, and he hath come forth from thy mouth . . . He hath become a god, and he hath brought for thee every good thing; he hath toiled for thee, and he hath emitted for thee in his name of Shu, the royal double. He hath laboured for thee in these things, and he beareth up for thee heaven with his hands in his name of Shu, the body of the sky."[1173]

The "toiling" Atlas-like pillar bearing the heavens was the watery "emission" of the creator. In the phrase "Thou hast emitted Shu," the Egyptian word translated as "emitted" is *ashesh*, which means both "pouring out" and "supporting," as noted by Budge: "It is difficult to reconcile these totally different meanings unless we remember that it is that which Tem, or Re-Tem has poured out which supports the heavens wherein shines the Sun-god. That which Tem, or Re-Tem has poured out is the light, and the light was declared to be the prop of the sky."[1174] Yet, while recognizing this connection of the heavens pillar with the "waters" and "light" poured out by the creator, Budge has no concrete image with which to link the integrated concepts.

The cosmic river, "poured out" from the receptacle of the mother womb, was not only the world mountain but also the single leg of the great god. Thus, in the Egyptian glyph we see the vase resting on the leg of heaven, as we should expect. And the *Book of the Dead* appropriately juxtaposes the leg with the river of light:

1167 *Ibid.*, 53.

1168 Wensinck, *The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites*, 18.

1169 Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 759, note 6.

1170 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 327.

1171 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 88.

1172 *Pyramid Text* 1871.

1173 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. II, 90.

1174 *Ibid.*, 90.

"O thou leg in the Northern Sky, and in that most conspicuous but inaccessible Stream."[1175] If one refers the imagery to the cosmic original , one sees that the descending stream *was* the leg!

The Egyptian river of the pillar, the celestial Nile, compares with the heavenly Euphrates invoked in Mesopotamian ritual. For the Babylonians knew "the pure Euphrates" as the "great mountain" Enlil:

With water which the lord [Ea] *has guided from the great mountain* [Enlil],

Water which down the pure Euphrates he has guided,

The product of the apsu, for the purpose of lustration.[1176]

Enlil, the world mountain personified, is thus "the man of the river of the netherworld, the man devouring river,"[1177] and, as noted by Van Buren, "the expression 'to set for the mountain' signified to depart this life by crossing the river of death."[1178]

While some traditions describe a *descending* pillar-stream, others depict it as an *upward*-flowing current. And often it is both. In a Sumerian myth, Enlil says to his wife:

"The 'water' of my king, let it go toward heaven, let it go toward earth . . ."[1179]

The Hindu *Rig Veda* has the waters passing "upwards and downwards"—like the stream of ether which Aristotle describes as a constantly moving "river" joining heaven and earth and composed of "ascending and descending vapours."[1180] An ancient Chinese philosopher, Yang Hiung, states that "the ether emanates and rises, and its splendorous essence floats above, and rolls in a sinuous current which has been named the heaven-River or torrent, and the vaporous stream or pure River."[1181] Having noted that the Egyptians recorded the ethereal stream by the hieroglyph , symbol of the pillar-god Shu, we thus find most relevant the ancient Chinese hieroglyph for "ether" . This concrete image sharply contrasts with the popular

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1175 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 165.

1176 Albright, "The Mouth of the Rivers," 178.

1177 Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 46.

1178 *Symbols*, 8. Though many writers on comparative mythology note the common belief in a celestial river—the mythical source of all terrestrial waters—no one seems to have perceived the root identity of this famous stream with the Primeval Hill. Darmesteter, however, comes close when he writes (of the Iranian celestial river): "Waters and light are believed to flow from the same spring and in the same bed: 'As light rises up from Hera Berezaiti [the polar mountain] so waters spring up from it and come back to it.'" Darmesteter, *op. cit.*, Part I, 225.

Similarly, Clifford reports that Ugaritic texts and seals depict the Canaanite cosmic mountain as "the paradisiacal source of water that gives fertility." The Mount, he states, "joins the upper and lower worlds; in it is contained a super abundance of life, of water; it is the throne of the deity." *Op. cit.*, 97.

Thus can the Japanese Kojiki announce: "That down river which is like a mountain of green leaves, looks like a mountain but it is not a mountain" (Philippi, *op. cit.*, 222), and the northwestern American Indians can speak of the river leading to the end (summit) of the world as a vast "pole" ascended by the souls of the dead. Alexander, *North American Mythology*, 248-49.

1179 Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 45.

1180 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 866.

1181 Schlegel, *L'Uranographie Chinoise*, 208.

definition of the mythical ether as an *imaginary substance filling the entire heavens.* The ether was the fiery, pillar-like river flowing along the world axis.

The Eden-Fountain

That all the world's waters originate in a central source is a belief found among all ancient peoples. The explanation lies not in geography but in *cosmography*—the map of the *celestial earth.* Viewed as an upward-flowing current the heavenly river becomes the fountain, spring, or well whose waters are dispersed in four streams flowing to the four corners of the circular plain on the mountaintop .

From the perspective of the cosmic dwelling, the fount rises from below, or "the deep." This very idea occurs in the imagery of Eden. In the Genesis account two statements concern the waters of the primitive paradise:

But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. (Gen. 2:6)

And a river went out from Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. (Gen. 2:10)

According to the general consensus of authorities, the second reference amplifies the first, indicating that a central source "watered the whole face of the ground" through four headstreams.1182

The word conventionally translated as "mist," observes Gaster, "is really a technical term (borrowed ultimately from Sumerian) meaning an upsurge of subterranean waters."1183 We can reasonably connect this channel of water from below with the "fountain of life" which a Psalm locates in the dwelling of God: "And thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."1184 Gaster calls this the "paradisiacal fountain."1185

But whether the life-bearing waters appear as "upsurge," "river," or "fountain," one receives the impression of a central source rising from below and flowing outward in four streams. Gaster finds a prototype of the upsurge in an Old Babylonian creation myth according to which, at first, "all land was sea, and in the midst of that sea was a spring which served as a pipe."1186 The same passage is noted by Butterworth, who suggests that the pipe or "well" rose along the cosmic axis.1187 When one relates this evidence to the concrete Mesopotamian imagery of four rivers radiating from the central sun the connection with the cosmic image becomes clear.

That the Babylonian and Hebrew channels of water are dispersed in four streams suggests a Germanic parallel—the spring Hvergelmer, the "navel of the waters," from whence all rivers flow.1188 The *Edda* declares that four streams issue from this central fount watering Asaheim, the home of the gods, while Hindu texts describe a fourfold headspring of all waters at "the Centre of Heaven."1189 The Iranian Realm of the

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1182 Clifford, *op. cit.*, 78.

1183 *Op. cit.*, 6-7.

1184 Psalm 36: 7-8.

1185 Gaster, *op. cit.*, 27.

1186 *Ibid.*, 7.

1187 *Op. cit.*, 68.

1188 De Santillana and von Dechend, *op. cit.*, 208-9; MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, 333.

1189 Gaster, *op. cit.*; *Rig Veda* ix 74, 6; ix, 113, 8.

Blest is watered by four streams issuing from the *central fountain* Ardvi Sura, while the *central fount* of the Chinese Kwen-lun disperses its waters in four streams, watering the garden at the summit.1190

It does not take a great deal of imagination to see that the paradisal fountain, sending forth the elements of life in the primordial birthplace—or place of rebirth—is the legendary "fountain of youth" or "fountain of immortality."

Probably the earliest prototype of these fountains is the Egyptian pillar-god Shu, bearing the waters and breath of life along the world axis. To breathe the North Wind of Shu or drink of the polar waters is to enjoy rebirth in the domain of beginnings, the land of immortality and perpetual youth. This breath or water (as the four Winds or Four Niles of heaven) courses out from the central fount and through the womb of Nut, the Holy Land which every king sought to attain upon death.1191

The King Of The Mountain

The few mythologists who discuss the cosmic mount at all tell us that it is a metaphor for the world axis: the axis of the turning heavens is *like* a mountain reaching from earth to the celestial pole (or pole star); by imagining a great pillar as the support and axle of the universe (say these mythologists), the ancients possessed a simple explanation for the observed motions of the heavenly bodies.

To evaluate this interpretation of the mythical mountain one must ask how well it accounts for all aspects of the tradition. In the myths the Mount appears as a column of light, often constituting the Universal Monarch's lower limbs or single "leg." United to the pillar, the god-king becomes the heaven-sustaining giant.

The myths also express the Mount as a cosmic serpent, whose body forms the serpentine trunk of the great father. In many traditions the pillar appears as the vertical stream of life—the ether, wind, breath, or waters either coursing down the world axis or rising along the axis to be dispersed in four streams animating the celestial kingdom. Saturn, the central sun, enthroned within the polar enclosure, ruled from the mountaintop.

Perhaps we can best judge the metaphorical explanation of the cosmic hill by placing ourselves in the position of an ancient observer and assuming that he looked out upon the same heavens which we see today. Our observer, noticing that the stars of the circumpolar region slowly swing around a central point, realizes that a line from that polar pivot through the earth serves as an invisible axle around which the sun, the moon, and all the stars revolve.

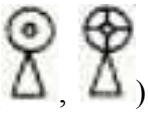
1190 The Biblical Fountain of Life, states Gaster, "has abundant parallels in folklore. In the Koran, for example, we read of the wondrous paradisiacal fountains, Salsabil and Kauthar ('Abundance'); while the North American Indians knew . . . of a Fountain of Youth and Vigor on the paradisal island of Bimini (or Boiuca). A hula chant from Hawaii likewise makes mention of such a fountain; while in Celtic belief it was held that in the midst of the island of Avalon flowed a rill from which sprang a fountain the waters of which gave life to the spirits of the departed. An old French poem speaks in a similar vein of a fountain of perpetual youth in the land of Cocagne; all who bathe in it are at once rejuvenated. In Pseudo-Callisthenes' version of the Alexander legend, the hero goes in search of the Fountain of Immortality; and it need scarcely be added that the Fountain of Youth, Beauty, or Immortality is a very common feature of European folktales." *Op. cit.*, 27, 28.

1191 The central spring or fount comes alive each night, appearing as a river of fire. This was the nature of Ammon's legendary "Fountain of the Sun" and of the spring of Zeus at Dodona. At midday, Pliny reports, the spring of Zeus fails altogether, "but it soon increases till it is full at midnight, from which time onwards it again gradually fails." Ammon's pool (the "Fountain of the Sun"), "cold by day, is hot by night."

The tradition is noted by Cook, who cites the reports of Herodotus, Lucretius, Ovid, Diodorus, and others to the effect that the Fountain of the Sun grows colder each morning until midday, but that as the day declines the fount grows warmer "becoming tepid at sundown and fairly bubbling with heat at midnight." It may seem strange that such a spring, increasing with the setting of the solar orb, was the "Fountain of the Sun." Among the chroniclers of the fount the current explanation was that by night the sun went below the earth and there boiled the water. Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 868.

In truth, the cosmic fountain rose to the central sun at the pole, becoming a fiery stream each night ("day," in the earliest ritual). Pliny says that the spring of Zeus at Dodona kindles torches—obviously no characteristic of a terrestrial spring. The mythical imagery pertains to the archetypal fountain of the sun, the fiery, ethereal stream of Shu, to which the Egyptians gave pictorial expression in the hieroglyph: (here).

Starting from this perception, what conjectures must our observer add in order to evolve the mythical view outlined in the previous pages? First, he must decide, in contradiction of his observations, that the axis is not an *invisible* column but a veritable pillar of fire and light. He must conclude also that a stationary sun rests (or once rested) atop the shining pillar—again in contrast to actual observation. He must identify this central sun not with the blazing solar orb but rather with the planet Saturn—though this remote and unimpressive planet today never approaches the polar region. Further, it must occur to our observer that Saturn, as king of the mountain, resides (or once resided) within a great band, divided by four primary streams. And finally, in a series of baseless speculations, he must conclude that in primeval times Saturn ruled at the summit as the *creator*, the *first king*, and the *first man*, presiding over a paradise of unlimited abundance.

Can one realistically propose that such a progression of thought could follow from a mere metaphor for the world axis? To arrive at the complete mythical image of the cosmic mountain () our hypothetical observer must not only heap one conjecture upon another, but *repudiate direct observation at each stage.* Of what value—religious, psychological, or otherwise—is a fiction which flatly contradicts the phenomena it is intended to explain?

Cynics may say that primitives are capable of conjuring any force imaginable to explain something they do not understand. But the hypothetical case before us does not require the primitive simply to invent explanations for things observed; it requires him to *deny immediate experience* and yet to compose a grandiose vision sufficiently persuasive to acquire hypnotic power over the ancient world. Of course the mass of available evidence argues against any such inventiveness on the part of early man.

Yet these difficulties vanish once we free ourselves from the doctrine of cosmic uniformity and consider whether our primitive observer may have actually witnessed the strange forces which ancient records describe in such detail. The polar mountain is only one ingredient in an integrated cosmology which seems to have prevailed over the entire ancient world. May not the mythical Mount, the central sun, the polar enclosure and crossroads—focusing on the celestial image —speak for powers which were “really there”?

IX: The Crescent

Our investigation up to this point covers five primary images of the Saturnian configuration: the enclosed sun , the sun-cross , the enclosed sun-cross , the enclosed sun and pillar , and the enclosed sun-cross and pillar . I have contended that these symbols realistically depict Saturn's actual appearance to the terrestrial observers.

Of course, one faces a special difficulty in attempting to prove that the sacred signs denoted a visible apparition. One can show that a coherent, global symbolism developed around the cosmic image ; but how can one really prove that this configuration was more than the invention of an ancient cult—perhaps the extraordinary product of an advanced race whose abstract unification of discordant cosmic powers gained world-wide distribution?

There is a specific category of evidence, I believe, which removes any possible appeal to abstractions. I refer to the symbolism of the crescent . In the detailed sources left us by the oldest civilizations the symbolic crescent—which all men automatically identify with our moon—plays a vastly greater role than generally perceived. But in none of the primary sources can one actually identify the crescent with the body we call "moon" today!

If there was any single turning point in my inquiry it was the realization that the crescent *with which ancient ritual deals is inseparable from the band of the enclosed sun* . The key is the image (or the simplified) showing the crescent as the *lower half of the band.*

It was this connection—occurring in both Egypt and Mesopotamia—that convinced me of the band's reality and led me to explore more deeply its various mythical formulations.

The crescent in the sign suggests that Saturn's band received illumination from the solar orb in such a way as to present terrestrial observers with two semicircles of light and shadow.

The concept of a half-illuminated band immediately places in a new perspective the universal image : is it possible that the famous sun-in-crescent represented not a contrived "conjunction" of the solar orb and new moon (the conventional explanation), but rather the primeval sun Saturn resting over the illuminated portion of his polar enclosure? Certainly the overlapping images and imply that the enclosed sun and sun-in-crescent pertain to a single astral configuration.

When O'Neill claimed that the sign symbolized the celestial pole, he took the sign as a kind of metaphor—an ancient means of representing the revolution of the circumpolar stars around a fixed centre. Others have identified the band as the illusory atmospheric halo which occasionally surrounds the solar orb, while still others explain the band as an abstract "circle of the sky." But the connection of the band with a *crescent* would suggest a more tangible character.

As a test of this possibility several questions require examination:

—Is Saturn, the primeval sun, associated with a crescent?

—Is there a consistent *connection* of the crescent and the band of the enclosed sun ?

—Is the crescent equated with the circle of the mother goddess?

—Does the Holy Land or celestial earth rest within the embrace of the crescent?

—Does a crescent occupy the summit of the cosmic mountain?

The Crescent And Saturn

It is well known that in classical mythology Saturn (or Kronos) wields a curved *harpe* or sickle by which he establishes his primeval rule, and most authorities would concur with Kerenyi in identifying the sickle as the "image of the new moon"1192 But why should Saturn possess the "new moon" as his weapon?

The connection appears to be very old, for it occurs also in ancient Babylonia. Ninurta, the planet Saturn, holds in his hands a weapon called SAR-UR-U-SAR-GAZ, and also BAB-BA-NU-IL-LA. The first name of Ninurta's weapon means "who governs the Cosmos and who massacres the Cosmos," while the second name means "hurricane which spares nothing."

The astonishing fact is this: these names of Saturn's weapon are the very epithets of the Babylonian Sin, the crescent "Moon."1193 That is, the crescent of Sin is the "weapon" (sickle, sword) with which Saturn founded and destroyed the primeval order.

But there is another peculiarity also: though always identified by scholars as the lunar sphere, Sin is never presented as a "half-moon," "three quarters moon" or "full moon." He is simply *Udsar* "the crescent." And however incongruous the relationship might appear today, Babylonian art continually presents Sin as the *lower half of the enclosed sun-cross* .

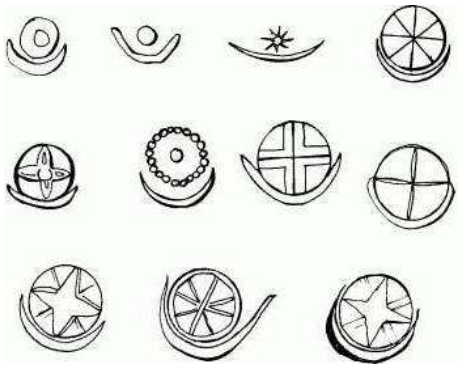


Figure 48. Various Mesopotamian versions of the sun-in-crescent.

Did this relationship of the Sin-crescent to Saturn and his enclosure originate in a haphazard combination of once independent symbols—or in a fundamental equation? The connection between Sin and Anu (the planet Saturn) amounts to an "identity," according to Jensen.1194 Rawlinson says the same thing: the Babylonians regarded Sin—the crescent—as an aspect of the planet Saturn.1195 Jeremias states the equation unequivocally: Sin=Saturn.1196

1192 Kerenyi, *Prometheus*, 51.

1193 Combe, *Histoire du Culte de Sin*, 11-12.

1194 *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, 191.

1195 Rawlinson, *Herodotus*, Essay X.

1196 *Handbuch der Altorientalischen Geisteskultur*, 96.

When one considers the relationship of the Sin-crescent to the sign , the nature of the identity becomes clear. The Sin-crescent is part of the circular dwelling or "body" of Saturn. Thus the texts invoke Sin as the *protective rampart of the Cosmos*—a "high defensive wall,"1197 or a:

Golden sanctuary, which in the land is magnificent!

*Luminous sanctuary which in the land is elevated!*1198

As Saturn's emanation, Sin is synonymous with the great god's circle of "glory" (halo); and this fact gives stunning significance to what must otherwise be regarded as a purely esoteric statement of Assyro-Babylonian astronomical texts: "Saturn stands in the halo of Sin," the texts proclaim (not once but several times).1199 Crescent and enclosure are one.

Do not these evidences strongly suggest that the ancients perceived a literal band around Saturn and that this Saturnian dwelling or "halo" displayed a crescent?

Another piece of evidence is noteworthy. The Babylonians represented the circle of Saturn's Cosmos (the circle of the gods) by the sign . If my contention is correct, the crescent of Sin was simply the brightly illuminated half of this circle (assembly). So it is of no small significance that Babylonian symbolism also represented the assembly by the sign . Needless to say, the heavens familiar to us today offer no conceivable source of the image.

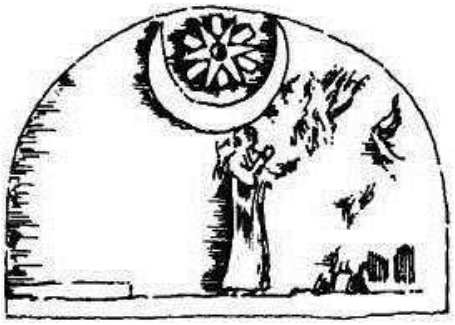


Figure 49. Sun-in-crescent, on the Ur-Nammu stele from Ur.

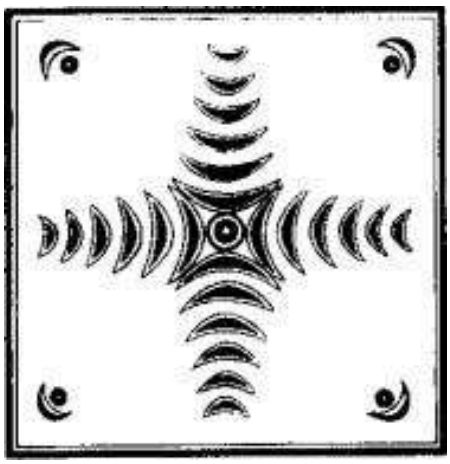


Figure 50. Hawaiian cross design showing alternate positions of the crescent around the central sun.

1197 Combe, *op. cit.*, 146.

1198 *Ibid.*, 114.

1199 Jastrow, "Sun and Saturn," 143.

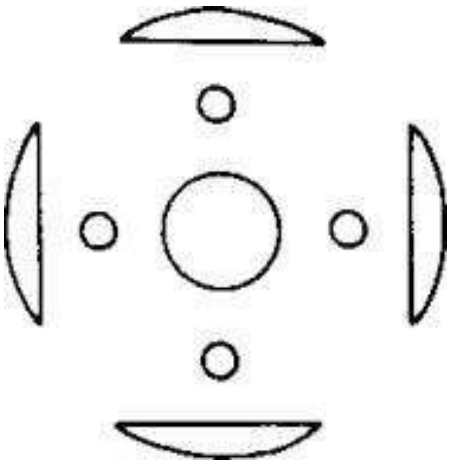


Figure 51. American Indian mounds, conveying the image of the revolving crescent.

Such identities point emphatically to an underlying relation of the ancient signs and . While the former depicts the entire Saturnian enclosure, the latter portrays only the brightly illuminated portion of the band—so that one might appropriately speak of Saturn's "crescent-enclosure" and schematically render the idea this way : .

It should be stressed, however, that the common location of the crescent *beneath* the central sun is not its only placement in ancient symbolism. At times the crescent appears to stand on end (or), while at other times it is inverted above the sun . Of course, this is exactly what we should expect—for if the crescent was the illuminated portion of a circumpolar band then that crescent must have appeared to revolve around the band with every full rotation of our planet upon its axis. One could thus render the daily rotation of the crescent schematically: .

As we shall see, there is a distinctive relationship of this revolving crescent to the phases of the archaic "day" and "night"—as well as to many other aspects of ancient cosmography. But let us take the present line of inquiry a little further. Does the equation of the crescent and enclosure occur also in Egypt? The Egyptians (as previously observed) called the enclosure Aten, recorded by the hieroglyph . (In the course of time this symbol evolved into the simplified form , with the enclosed sun dropped out. It is the latter form that generally prevails in later Egyptian art.)

In numerous representations of the Aten *a crescent forms the lower half of the enclosure.* In fig. 52, I offer an imposing example from the tomb of Ramesses VI, showing the Aten resting within a crescent and flanked by four male figures, two right and two left.

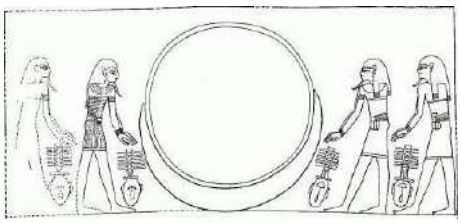


Figure 52. The Egyptian crescent-enclosure.

The hieroglyphic form of the crescent-enclosure is , a form which progressively developed into the images , , , , as the artists gradually expanded and flattened the crescent into a larger receptacle supporting the enclosure.

This image of the Aten and crescent seems to have generated great confusion among Egyptologists. One of the gods associated with the crescent-enclosure is Khensu, whom all authorities identify as the moon. But the

god's image remains enigmatic, for Budge writes: "He wears on his head the *lunar disk* in a crescent, or the *solar disk* with a uraeus, or the solar disk with the plumes and uraeus."[1200] Did the Egyptians have difficulty deciding whether the god was the sun or the moon?

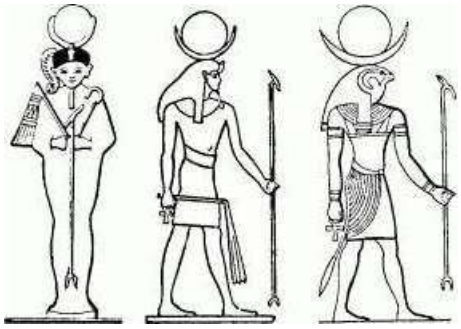


Figure 53. Three illustrations of the Egyptian god Khensu, showing the progressive enlargement of the Aten's crescent by Egyptian artists.

When Budge calls the sign a "*lunar* disk in a crescent," he avoids any association of the sign with the sun. But on the following page he writes of Khensu: "On his head rest the lunar crescent and disk. In this form he represents *both the sun at sunrise and the new moon.*"[1201] Either the Egyptians possessed a remarkable indifference concerning the astral character of their gods, or scholars have misunderstood the symbolism.

By putting aside all *a priori* verdicts one discerns a root consistency in the Egyptian image of the crescent-enclosure. In Egyptian ritual, the crescent is not the moon but a semi-circle "embracing" the central sun . Very early the Egyptians personified the crescent-enclosure as the divinity Ah, Aah, or Aahu, denoted by the glyph or , and always translated "moon." The word *ah*, however, also means "to embrace"—a concept devoid of meaning in connection with our moon, but charged with meaning when referred to the band (or the illuminated portion of the band) enclosing the central sun. *Ah* further signifies "to defend against" and "collar." That is, like the Babylonian "moon"-god Sin, the Egyptian *ah* signifies the defensive rampart protecting the sun-god: and the same crescent-enclosure is worn by the great god as his "collar." Again, such interrelationships can only appear absurd when considered as aspects of our moon.

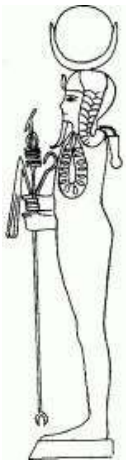


Figure 54. Ah, god of the crescent-enclosure.

The only "moon" invoked in early Egyptian ritual is that which houses the central sun. Chapter LXV of the *Book of the Dead*, bearing the title "The Chapter of *Coming Forth by Day* and of Gaining the Mastery over

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1200 *The Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol. II, 36. [Emphasis added.]

1201 *Ibid.*, 37. [Emphasis added.]

Enemies," begins, "Hail (thou) who shinest from the Moon [Ah] and who sendest forth light therefrom."[1202] "In several chapters the sun is spoken of as shining in or from the moon," notes Renouf.[1203]

One version of the *Coffin Texts* reads: "Going forth into the day and living after death. O you Sole One who rises [comes forth] in the moon, O you Sole One who shines in the moon."[1204] The "moon" is the dwelling of the solitary god, and the nature of this dwelling is accurately communicated to us in the ancient signs and .

Recalling that the Babylonians related the crescent of Sin to the circle of the gods , one wonders whether a similar relationship occurs in Egypt. The Egyptian assembly is the paut—a term which refers at once to the company of gods, the limbs of Osiris or Re, and the grain or bread of heaven. Though the Aten sign may serve as the determinative of paut, the most common hieroglyph for paut is , the inverted crescent-enclosure!

One thus finds a striking correspondence between the Egyptian and Mesopotamian symbolism of the crescent—a symbolism which takes on coherence only when one sees the crescent as the illuminated half of the polar enclosure . By no extent of rationalization can one accommodate the imagery to the sun and moon familiar to us today. Indeed the difficulty is recognized by Butterworth in his examination of the sun-in-crescent . The crescent "is not the natural luminary of heaven," writes Butterworth, "for it has its hollow side turned towards the 'sun.'"[1205] The point is worth emphasizing. The crescent of *our* moon always *faces* the solar orb, but in the early symbolism of the sun and crescent such a relationship rarely if ever occurs. No matter what the position of the crescent around the sun (, , , or), the sun stands within the "embrace" of the crescent, giving rise to what Briffault deems an "astronomically incongruous" image.[1206] But the image appears discordant only if we judge it against the present heavens. The primeval sun, states Butterworth, is "contained in the hollow of the recumbent crescent moon. *This is the sun that is always in the zenith*"[1207] (*i.e.*, it is not the body we call "sun" today).

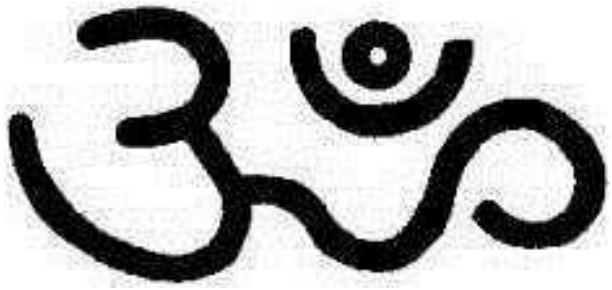


Figure 55. Hindu syllable OM, the creative word.

1202 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 228.

1203 *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 263-64.

1204 Faulkner, *The Coffin Texts*, 131.

1205 *The Tree at the Navel of the Earth*, 109.

1206 *The Mothers*, Vol. III, 82.

1207 *Op. cit.*, 127. [Emphasis added.]

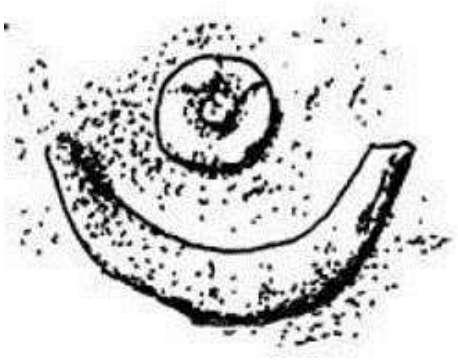


Figure 56. Phoenician sun-in-crescent.

The Crescent And Womb

If the crescent revered in antiquity denoted the illuminated half of Saturn's enclosure, then it must be synonymous with the cosmic womb—the mother goddess.

That numerous goddesses, in later times, came to be associated with *our* moon is a fact so thoroughly documented that we need not belabor the evidence here. Yet the reasons for this association are by no means clear. "From the beginning," states G. E. Smith, reviewing the early counterparts of the Egyptian Hathor, "all goddesses—and especially this most primitive stratum of fertility deities—were for obvious reasons intimately associated with the moon."1208

And what are the "obvious" reasons for the connection of the goddess with the moon? It is, Smith claims, "the cyclical periodicity of the moon which suggested the analogy with the similar physiological periodicity of women . . ." Also, "The influence of the moon upon dew and the tides, perhaps, suggested its controlling power over water and emphasized the life-giving function which its association with women had already suggested."1209 These reasons are neither obvious nor adequate.

What requires explanation is the crescent-goddesses' elementary character as a *receptacle housing the central sun.* That the Egyptian goddess Hathor was represented by a crescent or "lunette" does not alter the fact that her very name means "the dwelling of Horus." Similarly, Isis, also represented by a crescent, was the temple chamber or throne enclosing Osiris. The Babylonian Ishtar, whose symbol was the crescent, was the "womb" housing the man-child Tammuz. This very aspect of the crescent is explicit in the title of the "moon"-divinity Sin, who is called the "mother womb, begetter of all things."1210

It can hardly be doubted that the Saturnian crescent eventually became confused with our moon. The confusion is most noticeable in the case of the Greek Selene and Latin Luna, whose names were assigned to the lunar sphere. But neither the names nor the imagery of Selene and Luna *originated* in connection with our moon. Within the sphere of Luna "Sol is hidden like a fire." Helios dwells as the impregnating seed within the womb of Selene.1211 "According to these ancient ideas," writes Jung, "the moon is a vessel of the sun: she is a universal receptacle of the sun in particular."1212 For an explanation of this imagery one must look to the former celestial order. Long before the Greeks named the solar orb Helios, they knew Helios as the planet Saturn—just as Sol primitively signified the same planet. Selene and Luna derive their mythical character from Saturn's enclosure, and the signs and offer a literal portrait of the ancient mother goddess.

1208 *The Evolution of the Dragon*, 56.

1209 *Ibid.*, 56.

1210 Suhr, *The Spinning Aphrodite*, 57.

1211 Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 177.

1212 *Ibid.*, 129.

Crescent And Motherland

There is a further implication: the "moon" must mean the same thing as the created "earth" watered by the four rivers of life. Though it is difficult to imagine a less likely identity in conventional terms, here is Faber's conclusion concerning the moon and earth in global mythology: "The female divinity, however apparently multiplied according the genius of polytheism, ultimately resolve themselves into one, who is accounted the great universal mother both of gods and men, and *this single deity is pronounced to be alike the Moon in the firmament and the all-productive Earth.*"1213

Faber gives far too many examples than can be cited here. In each case the goddess "was astronomically the Moon," but "her mystic circle is declared to be the circle of the World."1214 The goddess Isis, reports Faber, "was declared to be equally the moon and the earth: and she is at the same time unanimously determined by the ancient theologists to be one with Ceres, Proserpine, Minerva, Venus, Diane, Juno, Rhea, Cybele, Jana, Atergatis . . . (etc.). These again are said to be mutually the same with each other: and if we descend to particulars, we still find them indifferently identified with the Earth and the Moon."1215

What might our earth (as perceived by the ancients, not by modern astronomy) have in common with the lunar sphere to promote this seemingly irrational identity? The question is raised by Briffault: "There is not, in fact, an earth-goddess who is not at the same time a moon-goddess. All Earth Mothers, as Bachofen remarked 'lead a double life, as Earth and as Moon.'"1216 The identity prevails not only in the advanced civilizations but among primitive races also. The Maori identify the "moon" (Hine, or "the Woman") with the earth. So do Caribbean natives—and this identity corresponds with the overlapping personalities of the "moon" and "earth" among the Mexicans, Chaldaeans, Chinese, Hindu, Greeks, and northern European races.

Briffault confesses the irrationality of the equation: "The Greeks expressly called the moon 'a heavenly earth' and 'a part of the earth.' That persistent identification of the moon with the earth would be unintelligible in peoples ignorant of modern astronomical conceptions, let alone in uncultured races such as the Caribs and the Polynesians. When the earth is conceived as a huge, solid, immovable surface contrasting in every respect with the wandering sphere or disc of the moon in the heavens, *there appears to be no imaginable ground for assimilating the one to the other. The identification cannot arise from any analogy in appearance or function.*"1217

Briffault proposes to resolve the dilemma by positing an intimate connection of "the moon and earth with women and their functions." He suggests that the divinized female came first and her attributes were, through analogy, transferred at once to the moon and the earth.1218 But that such indirect reasoning on the part of ancient man should lead to an identification so universal and so fundamental is not easy to believe.

Actually, no rationalization of this identity is necessary. In the archaic world order, the crescent and earth (land, province) *were* identical. The circle of the "moon" (crescent-enclosure) was the island of beginnings—*Saturn's Earth.* The mythical "moon," as Faber observes, was "what some call 'a terrestrial heaven' or 'paradise,' and others a 'heavenly earth' . . . it is described as wearing the semblance of a *floating island* . . ."1219 This "island of the Moon" contained "within its sphere the Elysian fields or Paradise," which came to be known as "the paradise of the moon."

1213 *The Origins of Pagan Idolatry*, Vol. II, 3. [Emphasis added.]

1214 *Ibid.*, 5.

1215 *Ibid.*, 6.

1216 *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, 61.

1217 *Ibid.*, 61. [Emphasis added.]

1218 *Ibid.*, 61.

1219 Faber, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, 13. [Emphasis added.]

There exists, in fact, a most appropriate Mesopotamian symbol of this paradise, though it has yet to receive the serious attention of the experts. It is the sign , repeated again and again on Mesopotamian cylinder seals. The sign depicts the quartered earth, the celestial "land of the four rivers." That this paradisal earth lies within the embrace of a vast crescent may appear foolish to modern critics, but is strictly consistent with numerous independent traditions equating the primeval "earth" and "moon."[1220]

The Crescent And Mount

In all ancient myths of the lost paradise, the land of peace and plenty rests upon a cosmic pillar—"earth's highest mountain." One of the peculiarities of the Mount is that it possesses two peaks, rising to the right and left of the central column.

The Egyptian Mount of Glory (Khut) reveals two peaks between which rests the Aten or enclosed sun . Depicted by this sign are "the two great mountains on which Re appears."[1221] And what is most interesting about the Egyptian symbol of the cleft peak is that it finds strikingly similar parallels in other lands. The Mesopotamian sun-god rests upon a twin-peaked world mountain of identical form (fig. 60), and the same dual mount occurs also in Mexico—here too revealing the sun-god between the two peaks (fig. 61).

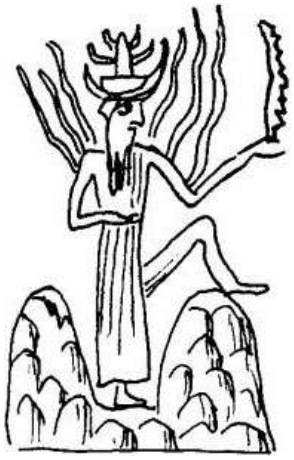


Figure 60. Assyro-Babylonian Shamash standing between the two peaks.

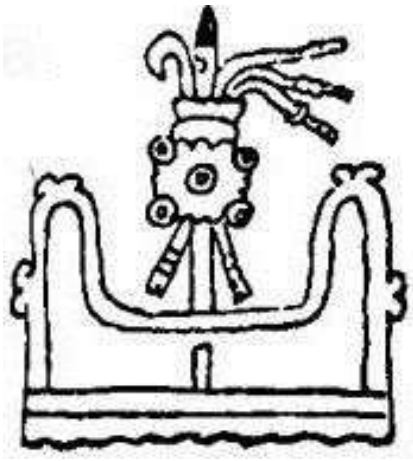


Figure 61. (a) Mexican twin peaks, with central staff;

1220 *Ibid.*, 18.

1221 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 224.

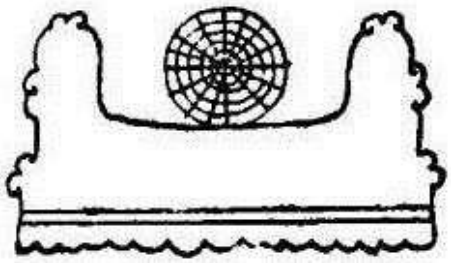
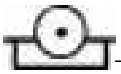


Figure 61. (b) Central sun between two peaks.

The Delaware Indians recall a primeval land—"the Talega country," where long ago "all kept peace with each other." The pictograph of the lost land is  —an extraordinary counterpart to the Egyptian Mount of Glory .

In Hebrew and Muslim thought "the mountain of paradise is a double one," observes Wensinck.1222 To the Hebrews Sinai, Horeb, Ebol, and Gerezim were all conceived as images of a twin-peaked mountain, states Jeremias.1223 In the primeval Tyre (paradise), according to the description of Nonnus, a "double rock" rises from the ocean. In its centre is an olive (the central sun) which automatically emits fire, setting it in a perpetual blaze.1224 The Syrian and Hittite great gods stand equally balanced upon two mountains.1225 In the beginning, according to a central Asiatic legend related by Uno Holmberg, "there was only water, from which the two great mountains emerged."1226 From the central mount of Hindu cosmology rise two secondary peaks to the right and left.1227 Of course, the twin pillars of Hercules point to the same idea.

The ancient concept of a cleft summit left a deep imprint in ancient architecture, according to Vincent Scully, author of the book *The Earth, the Temple and the Gods*. In Crete, "a clearly defined pattern of landscape use can be recognized at every palace site," Scully writes. "More than this, each palace makes use, as far as possible, of the same landscape elements. These are as follows: first, an enclosed valley of varying size in which the palace is set; I should like to call this the 'Natural Megaron'; second, a gently mounded or conical hill in axis with the palace to north or south, and lastly a higher, *double-peaked or cleft mountain* some distance beyond the hill but on the same axis. The mountain may have other characteristics of great sculptural force . . . but *the double peaks or notched cleft seem essential to it* . . . It forms in all cases a climactic shape which has the quality of causing the observer's eye to come to rest in its cup . . . All the landscape elements listed above are present at Knossos, Phaistos, Mallia, and Gournia, and in each case they themselves—and this point must be stressed—are the basic architecture of the palace complex."1228

The same pattern occurs repeatedly throughout Greece and Asia Minor, according to Scully. A good example is the siting of the citadel of Troy, which looks out across the isle of Imbross to the more distant isle of Samothrace from which rises (directly "beyond the long low mound of Imbross") the "double peaks" of Phengari.1229

1222 "The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth," 13.

1223 Jeremias, *op. cit.*, 57.

1224 Wensinck, "Tree and Bird Cosmological Symbols in Western Asia," 19, citing Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, XI, 407 sqq.

1225 Butterworth, *op. cit.*, 55.

1226 *Der Baum des Lebens*, 62.

1227 Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, Vol. II, 204-5.

1228 *The Earth, The Temple and the Gods*, 11. [Emphasis added.]

1229 *Ibid.*, 22, 203.

In what ritual notion did this common architectural requirement originate? The name of Samothrace's sacred mountain offers a vital clue: *Phengari* is the "Mountain of the Moon." The title is not incidental, for the "Mountain of the Moon"—in more than one land—is the very title of the Primeval Hill, the pillar of the Cosmos! Thus, the "White Island" of Hindu myth is distinguished by the presence of a primordial mountain rising to the "moon." Mount Ararat, which Faber connects with the paradisal hill, is denominated *Laban*, "the mountain of the Moon." So too does the crescent moon rest on the summit of the Hindu Meru. Faber writes: "At the head of the Nile, according to the Indian geographers, is the Meru of the southern hemisphere: this is also a mountain of the Moon . . . At the source of the Rhine, the Rhone, the Po and the Danube, all of which were holy rivers, is what may be styled 'the Meru of the west': here again we have a mountain of the Moon, for Alpan is but a variation of Laban, and Jura or Ira or Rhe denotes 'the Moon' equally in the Celtic and the Babylonian dialects. Lebanon, at the head of the sacred river Jordan, was another lunar mountain . . . And even in the island of Borneo, the peak at the head of its largest river is known by the title of 'the mountain of the Moon.'"[1230]

An early prototype of such mountains, Faber contends, is the vast summit of the Himalaya, from which the Ganges flows. The Hindus deemed this towering mass *Chandrasichara*, the "mountain of the Moon," while two small hillocks of this lofty region receive the title *Somagiri*, the "Mountains of the Moon."[1231]

At work is the cosmic image of a crescent moon resting upon a great mountain and thereby forming a *cleft* summit. ". . . The figure presented to their imagination, would be a conical peak terminating in two points formed by the two horns of the crescent."[1232] Consistent with the universal sun-in-crescent , the great father himself stands midway between the peaks of the right and left, states Faber.[1233]

One thus derives the images and as the simplest renderings of the "Mountain of the Crescent." Every student of ancient symbolism, of course, will recognize these as images of global distribution, presented in an infinite number of variations.

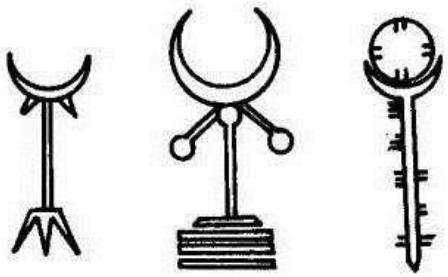


Figure 62. Babylonian pillared crescents.

1230 *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, 202.

1231 *Ibid.*, 203-4.

1232 *Ibid.*, 204.

1233 *Ibid.*, 204.

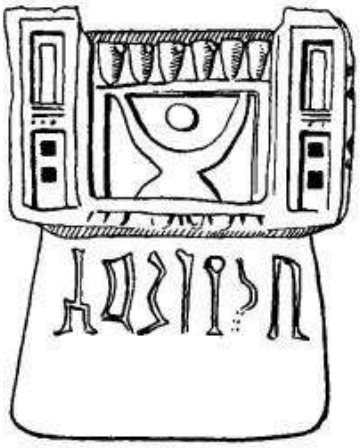


Figure 63. Sabaean altar, with pillared sun-in-crescent.

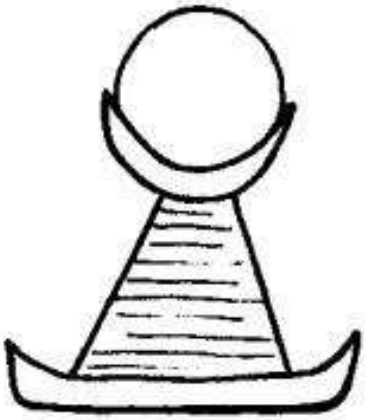


Figure 64. Hittite crescent-enclosure on support.

Figure 65. Pillared crescent, from Peru.

Surely one cannot ignore this general symbolism of the cosmic mountain in attempting to understand the common mountain image . This pictograph, I suggest, simply *adapts the primal crescent to its mythical interpretation as two peaks*. Which is to say, the Egyptian (or the later) refers to the same cosmic form as the crescent-enclosure . In fact, Budge says as much when he calls the latter sign an image of "the sun at sunrise"—for this is precisely the purported meaning of the sign . (I shall subsequently show that by picturing the crescent below the central sun as opposed to the alternative positions , the ancients denoted the archaic "day," the period of Saturn's greatest brilliance.)

That the two peaks of the Egyptian Khut signified the cleft summit of a single mountain is forcefully indicated by the "mountain-sceptre" of Re, showing the dual mount as the top of a single column . As observed by many authorities, the sceptre represented the pillar of heaven. This particular form closely parallels the early "mountain" hieroglyph , which passed into the image , identifying the cleft peak with the solitary god's original "perch" or "pedestal."[1234] The "pedestal," as we have seen, was also called the pillar of Shu, which the hieroglyphs record by the sign . Here too a single column branches into two secondary supports. (In following sections the reader will find numerous evidences connecting the images and with the underlying cosmic form).

The Egyptian hieroglyphs also employ the mountain sign , appearing to show *three* peaks; and in early representations this configuration, too, appears as the summit of a central pillar . There can be little doubt that the three-peaked mount pertains to the same idea as the twofold summit. The middle peak appears to indicate a simple extension of the central column. The great god, who stands between the peaks of the right and left, becomes himself a part of the mount on which he rests.

This development finds illustration in the Hindu symbolism of Mount Meru, the mountain of the crescent moon. Meru, despite its *crescent* peak, is the *tricutadri*, or mountain of *three* summits. Similarly, the Hindu "White Island" or lost paradise is deemed "the three-peaked land."[1235]

Compare Olympus in the Greek poem:

From Olympus, the summit

From the three *peaks of Heaven.*[1236]

The basis of this symbolism, according to Faber, is the great god, "standing upright" in the midst of the cleft so as to present the image of a central mountain "terminating in three points formed by the two horns of the crescent and its centrical mast [the great god]."[1237]

1234 Percy E. Newberry, "Two Cults of the Old Kingdom," 24*ff.*

1235 Faber, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, 204.

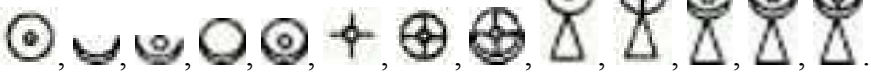
1236 Quoted in Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, Vol. I, 114. [Emphasis added.]

1237 *Op. cit.*, vol. III, 204-5.

Accordingly, the primal Hindu image passes into the later , which forms the crest of the Hindu trident —the symbol of the cosmic column. The trident, in other words, originated in the cleft "Mountain of the Moon" . To this image answers the Egyptian three-peaked column .

Of the three-peaked mount much more could be said, but at the cost of distracting from the more basic theme—the two-fold summit. It is my contention that the myths of the split peak originated in the prehistoric perception of a vast crescent seeming to constitute the summit of a cosmic column . Within the cup of the crescent rested the sun . Moreover the crescent was itself simply the illuminated half of a circular band . And if we include the four rivers of life we arrive at the form as the complete image of the Saturnian configuration. Have the ancients preserved for us a literal rendering of this idea?

One could not ask for a more accurate representation than that provided by the cylinder seals of ancient Mesopotamia, which offers us the symbol .[1238] The circular paradise on the mountaintop, watered by the four rivers, lay within the primeval "moon" (of which our lunar crescent is but a pale emblem).

Surely the remarkable correspondence of myth and symbol concerning this celestial configuration (a configuration which flatly contradicts the present arrangement of the heavens) suggests that something more than primitive fancy is at work. If the thesis outlined here is correct, then a single celestial apparition gave rise to these interrelated images:  .

The crescent is a central ingredient in the symbolism, and its presence implies a tangible band so illuminated as to display two halves, one bright, the other more subdued.

The Heavenly Twins

Saturn's enclosure united two semicircles of light and shadow, distinguished by a revolving crescent. In the bright and dark divisions of the enclosure the ancients perceived the cosmic twins, the "two faces" of the Universal Monarch.

In the human domain, one of every eighty-six births involves twins. But among the gods, the abnormal is the rule. The great father is either born of or raised by twins, while also giving birth to twins. And the great god himself commonly appears in dual form.

Prevailing astronomical explanations of the celestial twins identify them as a circle of day and night, or as the evening and morning star, or as the sun and moon. The constellation Gemini became the zodiacal representative of the celestial twins, though it is almost universally agreed that the mythical pair existed long before the naming of such star groups.

Who Were The Dioscuri?

Privileged as the starting point of countless treatises on the twins are the Greek Dioscuri (the two sons of Zeus), Castor and Polydeuces. In a battle with their cousins Idas and Lynceus (sons of Aphareus) Castor fell mortally

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1238 Hans Henning van Der Western, *Ancient Oriental Seals in the Collection of Mr. Edward T. Newell*, fig. 6, no. 217.

wounded. While his brother gasped for breath, Polydeuces beseeched Zeus: "Bid me also die, O King, with this my brother."

Zeus answered the prayer by granting that the two brothers spend alternate days above and below the earth. Pindar records Zeus's promise: ". . . If thou contendest for thy brother, and art minded to have an equal share with him in all things, then mayest thou breathe for half thy time beneath the earth, and for half thy time in the golden homes of heaven."1239

Cook's explanation of the reward is simple enough: the brothers represented the day and night sky, revolving round our earth. Their alternating position provides "a simple but graphic expression of the obvious fact that the divine sky is half dark, half bright."1240 Supporting this interpretation is the remark of Philon the Jew concerning the habit of mythologists: "They bisected the sky theoretically into hemispheres, one above, the other below, the earth, and called them Dioskoroi, adding a marvelous tale about their life on alternate days."1241

Several centuries after Philon, Joannes the Lydian (living in the sixth century A.D.) repeated the theory: "The philosophers declare that the Dioskoroi are the hemisphere below, and the hemisphere above, the earth; they take it in turns to die, according to the myth, because turn and turn about they pass beneath our feet."1242 Observing that semicircles were sacred to the Dioscuri, Cook concludes that the two brothers personify two halves of a celestial circle—"the animate Sky."1243 This, of course, would not preclude the ancients from employing the sun and moon or the morning and evening star as symbols of the light and dark hemispheres: "These are but secondary modes of denoting the great primary contrast between Day and Night," states Cook.1244

Of the celestial twins one could pursue example upon example in classical myth alone: Apollo and Artemis, Zetes and Calais, Zerhus and Amphion, Hercules and Iphicles, Otus and Ephialtes, Pelias and Neleus, to name a few. And these figures of the celestial twins are simply a small segment of the vastly larger Indo-European pattern reviewed by Walker.1245

Figure 66. The Latin twin god Janus, whose single hat means "Cosmos."

1239 Pindar, *Nemian Odes*, 10.148*ff*.

1240 *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, 440.

1241 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 432-33.

1242 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 433.

1243 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 434.

1244 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 435.

1245 *Ibid.*, Vol. I, 771.

Also, one must place alongside the twins the comparable *two-headed* or *two-faced* god. Here we meet Janus, whom the Italians knew as the "most ancient of gods," and whom they regularly depicted with two faces, looking in opposite directions (fig. 66). Janus, according to Cook, personified the vault of heaven, his two faces signifying the two aspects of the sky (day and night): Janus "was originally the divine Sky. The divine Sky is bright by day and dark by night. Being, therefore, of a two-fold or twin character, Janus was naturally represented as a double-faced god."1246

Janus, as the twin-god *par excellence* gives us the title *Janiform*, applied to any two-headed or two-faced deity (of which the ancient world provides innumerable instances). I give as an example a specimen from Etruria (fig. 66), depicting a Janiform head wearing a *petasos* or broad-brimmed hat (often associated with Hermes). This compares with the "broad-brimmed hat" worn by Odin, Attis, and others. According to Eisler, whose opinion is shared by Cook, the hat symbolized, simply, "the sky" so that the two faces together correspond to the entire circle of the hat (heaven, sky).1247

The Black And White Twins

Though not all twins are black and white, many are, and it is this very dichotomy which Cook notices in several Greek examples. In certain instances one twin appears on a white horse and the other on a black.1248

This aspect of the twins appears to be universal. In his character as a twin-god the Mexican Quetzalcoatl unites with Mictlantecuhtli, the two divinities appearing back to back, one black, the other white.1249 The Zuni represented their twin war gods by black and white masks. The black and white Asvins of Hindu myth are an obvious parallel. Hindu philosophers, states Agrawala, divided the cosmic wheel into two halves, one black and one white, which they personified as twin sisters forming "a circle (chakra) revolving in eternal time."1250 In Melanesia, states Eliade, "one constantly comes across the myth of the two brothers, one bright, the other dull."1251

Often the twins struggle with each other (sometimes one is "good" and the other "evil"), a feature which complements the black-white and rising-setting aspect of the Dioscuri. Chinese myth describes two brothers named Opeh and Schichin at constant war.1252 The Ugaritic twins Mot and Aliyan quarrel, as do the Celtic Gwyn and Gwythur.1253 Remus dies at the hand of Romulus. Acrisius and Proetus quarrel while in the womb of their mother. Jacob and Esau do the same. The North American Indian mother goddess Awehai conceived twins who battled while yet in the womb. There can be little doubt that the Chinese yin and yang (primordial forces of light and darkness) or the Manichaean primal pair of good and evil bore a close relationship to this general tradition of the cosmic twins.

The black and white aspect of the twins appears to be consistent with Cook's theory of a revolving heavenly sphere divided into contending hemispheres of light and darkness. But there are other features of the twins which fit less comfortably into Cook's model. Why were the twins so often conceived as two *primeval rulers* (or two aspects of the Universal Monarch, the founder of civilization)?

1246 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 378.

1247 Eisler, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt*.

1248 Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 435.

1249 Neumann, *The Great Mother*, 205.

1250 *Sparks from the Vedic Fire*, 42-43, 62*ff*.

1251 *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 52.

1252 O'Neill, *The Night of the Gods*, 836.

1253 Graves, *The Greek Myths*, 243, note 2.

The Dioscuri bore a distinct relationship to the twins Romulus and Remus, the legendary *founders* of Rome. There seems to have been a general tradition of dual kingship, for just as the Dioscuri, in early Doric days, found personification in two kings of Sparta, the Latin Romulus and Remus appear as royal twins, reigning with equal rights. Representations of Romulus and Remus often assimilate the pair to the Dioscuri.1254

The question is whether something as abstract as a boundless "sky" could have provoked the idea of a primeval pair ruling in effect as a single king. The twins, as in the case of Janus, attach themselves to the Universal Monarch as his two faces, looking in opposite directions. Cook, of course, recognizes this, but he conceives Janus, the primeval god-king, not in concrete terms, but as an open expanse—the "sky."

Was this the true identity of Janus? One notes with considerable interest the statement of Joannes the Lydian: "Our own Philadelphia still preserves a trace of the ancient belief. On the first day of the month (*i.e.*, January) there goes in procession no less a personage than Janus himself, dressed up in a two-faced mask, *and the people call him Saturnus, identifying him with Kronos.*"1255

To Cook this identity of Janus and Saturn must result from an ancient confusion, but to us it accurately reflects the archaic doctrine. Janus, as the "most ancient indigenous god of Italy" (Herodian's phrase),1256 is the great father, whom the star-worshippers of many lands recognized as the planet Saturn.

Also crucial is the relationship of the celestial pair to the *cosmic pillar*. Many ancient representations of the twins or twin-god place the two heads atop the sacred pole. As for the Janiform type in Greece, Cook cites instances in which "the double face is set on a pillar or post."1257 One finds similar portrayals of the two-faced god in China, northern Europe, Siberia, India, the Americas, and elsewhere. To one who conceives the post as nothing more than a venerated piece of wood, the connection between it and the two-faced god will mean nothing. But to one who sees the sacred post as the emblem of the Primeval Hill, the placement is charged with meaning: the cosmic twins occupied the summit of the central mountain.

Of the male deities worshipped by the Navaho, states Alexander, the most important are the twins Nayanezgani and Thobadzistshini, who bring to an end the primeval Age of Giants. "Their home is on a mountain in the centre of the Navaho country." "The legend of the heaven-growing rock, lifting twins to the skies, occurs more than once in California."1258

Here are two aspects of the celestial twins which do not readily fit Cook's explanation of the pair. The twins are two faces or two aspects of Saturn, the Universal Monarch; and they sit upon the cosmic mountain. Are these accidental attributes of the twins or do they pertain to an integrated image?

It is surprising that Cook, while giving meticulous attention to classical testimony, gives no attention to the more ancient prototype of the Dioscuri and the Janiform god. The most complete evidence comes from ancient Egypt, whose ritual and art provide an incisive portrait of the twins.

1254 Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 442-43.

1255 Quoted in Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol II, 376. [Emphasis added.]

1256 *Ibid.*, 335.

1257 *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, 381.

1258 Alexander, *North American Mythology*, 235.

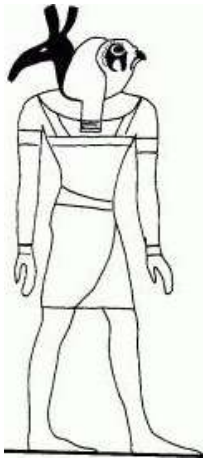


Figure 67. The twin god Horus-Set.

Of the black and white brothers the world knows no older example than the Egyptian pair Horus and Set. In fig. 67 the heads of Horus and Set appear upon one body, looking to the right and left. The black head of Set contrasts sharply with the light head of Horus, emphasizing the pair's role as "the two opponent gods."

Closely related to Horus and Set are the twins Isis and Nephthys, often portrayed back to back. The Egyptian pairs Shu and Tefnut, Thoth and Maat, Sekhet and Neith all reveal a similar underlying character.

In the *Book of the Dead* the pictograph of the two "portions" of Horus and Set is the sign , the band of the Aten.[1259] The clear implication is that the sun-god's enclosure possesses two twin-like divisions, one light, the other dark. Moreover, if the circle of the Aten is half light, half dark, surely one cannot ignore the related sign , the crescent-enclosure, which appears to provide a literal illustration of the two realms of Horus and Set.

In the same way, the Egyptian *shen* bond stood not only for the sun-god's enclosure (Aten) but for the *twins* Isis and Nephthys.

Together Isis and Nephthys, the back-to-back twins, formed the protective "border" or "boundary" of the All, the Cosmos. While the Egyptian *tcher* means "boundary," "limit," *tehera* means "protective rampart" and *tcherti* the two halves of the boundary or rampart. The two *Tcherti* are Isis and Nephthys.

Egyptian cosmology reveals the coherent image of a *bisected enclosure* revolving around the central sun. Two interrelated aspects of the twins stand out:

1. In one sense the twins are simply the light and dark halves of the enclosure—a characteristic most pronounced in the pair Horus and Set.

2. But the twofold enclosure revolved around the stationary light god, and by its revolution, the illuminated crescent—the "face" of the great god—marked out the respective divisions of the "right and left" (,) and "above and below" (,). In their primary personality, the twins Isis and Nephthys represented these counterpoised positions of the crescent, and hence two divisions of the celestial kingdom. (In standard translations, the divisions of the left and right are usually rendered as "east" and "west," confusing cosmography (the map of the Cosmos) with the local geography, while the "above" and "below" are translated "heaven" and "earth," leading to a different but equally troublesome confusion.)

This interpretation of the cosmic twins coincides with Cook's in identifying the pair with a celestial circle, half dark and half light. Distinguishing this view from Cook's, however, is the proposed nature of the circle. Did the twofold circle mean the abstract "sky," or a concrete band (with crescent) enclosing the central sun?

1259 Massey, *Ancient Egypt*, 375.

A requirement of the interpretation set forth here is that the sun-god stand *between* the twins and that the circle of the twins *revolve around him.* Of course, if the twins refer to the open "sky" and the sun-god means the solar orb, it would be meaningless—in fact a contradiction—to place the god in the centre of the circle (*i.e.*, between the semicircles of day and night) or to speak of the twins revolving around the sun-god.

The Egyptians' great god wears the enclosure of the Aten as a "girdle." *According to the Pyramid Texts this garment is the circle of the celestial twins*: "I am girt with the girdle of Horus, I am clad with the garment of Thoth, Isis is before me and Nephthys is behind me."[1260] Such language occurs repeatedly in early Egyptian sources. In the *Book of the Dead*, the king asks, "May I see Horus . . . , with the god Thoth and the goddess Maat, one on each side of him."[1261] In the *Coffin Texts* Atum declares of the twins Shu and Tefnut: "I was between these two, the one being in front of me, the other behind me."[1262] "The two mistresses of Buto accompany you to the right and left."[1263] The *Pyramid Texts* announce that the "two great and mighty Enneads . . . set Shu for you on your east [left] side and Tefnut on your west [right] side."[1264] The king proclaims, "Neith is behind me, and Selket is before me."[1265] Thus the Universal Monarch gives "judgement in the heavens *between* the two Contestants [Horus and Set]."[1266]

The light and dark halves of the enclosure—in perpetual revolution, or "conflict"—are balanced by the great god. "I am the girdle of the robe of the god Nu . . . which uniteth the two fighting deities who dwell in my body [*khat*, "womb"]."[1267] "I am the god who keepeth opposition in equipoise as his Egg circleth round."[1268]

With a little imagination one might possibly conceive the open sky as a black and white sphere revolving around our earth, but such a circle could in no sense appear as a *twofold band around a central sun.* It is here, in short, that Cook's explanation of the twins appears to break down.

The Egyptian twins signify two divisions of the Aten . There is only one enclosure of the sun, yet by virtue of its portions of light and shadow it becomes the "twofold circle" or, as often translated, "the two circles." And this "double" band is the womb of the mother goddess, giving birth to the central sun. A *Coffin Text* thus celebrates "the *two rings* which have given birth to the gods."[1269] The reference is to the twofold enclosure of Isis and Nephthys. "He was conceived in Isis and begotten in Nephthys," states the *Book of the Dead.*[1270] The same source declares: "I was conceived by the goddess Sekhet, and the goddess Neith gave birth to me."[1271]

Accordingly, the *Coffin Texts* say:

1260 *Pyramid Text* 1089.

1261 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 6.

1262 Lacau, *Traduction des Textes des Cercueils du Moyen Empire*, 52.

1263 *Ibid.*, 37.

1264 *Pyramid Texts* 1690-91.

1265 *Pyramid Text* 1375.

1266 *Pyramid Text* 289. [Emphasis added.]

1267 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 261.

1268 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 108.

1269 Lacau, *op. cit.*, 48. [Emphasis added.]

1270 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 261.

1271 *Ibid.*, 229.

. . . *Your* two mothers *who are in Nekheb* [the celestial province] *shall come to you* . . .[1272]

Oh you two who conceived Re, you shall bear me who am in the egg.[1273]

The *Pyramid Texts* reveal the same notion of a twofold womb:

. . . *The two* great ladies [Isis and Nephthys] *bore you.*[1274]

My mother is Isis, my nurse is Nephthys.[1275]

The King was conceived by Sakhmet, and it is Shezmetet who bore the King.[1276]

The two goddesses were not merely twins, but the two halves of a single womb. These two divisions may appear either as the *two thighs* of Nut ("Re shines between the thighs of Nut")[1277] or as the thighs of Isis and Nephthys. To attain the primeval womb "the King ascends upon the thighs of Isis, the King climbs upon the thighs of Nephthys."[1278]

That the two-fold enclosure was something more than an ill-defined "sky" is proved by the enclosure's various symbolic forms. The fact is that *every mythical formulation of the Saturnian band (assembly, holy land, temple, city, eye, serpent, etc.) is specifically portrayed as a twofold circle, whose two divisions are the cosmic twins.*

Here are a few examples from the Egyptian system:

The Two Assemblies

Egyptian texts identify the circle of the gods as the "Two Conclaves" or "Two Enneads":

. . . *You stand in the Conclaves of the Mount of Glory . . . the Two Enneads come to you bowing.*[1279]

The sky is strong and Nut jubilates when she sees what Atum has done, while he sat among the Two Enneads.[1280]

I have given you vindication in the Two Conclaves.[1281]

My lips are the two Enneads: I am the Great Word.[1282]

This twofold circle of the gods forms at once the "body" of the great god and the "womb" of the great mother:

Hail, Khepera . . . the two-fold company of the gods is thy body. [*khat*, "body," may also be translated "womb"].[1283]

1272 Faulkner, *op. cit*., 61. [Emphasis added.]

1273 *Ibid.*, 168.

1274 *Pyramid Text* 804. [Emphasis added.]

1275 *Pyramid Text* 1375.

1276 *Pyramid Text* 262.

1277 Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri*, 210.

1278 *Pyramid Text* 996.

1279 *Pyramid Texts* 1292-93.

1280 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 232.

1281 *Ibid.*, 237.

1282 *Pyramid Text* 1100.

1283 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 108.

I am a great one, the son of a great one. I issue from between the thighs of the Two Enneads.[1284]

I have come forth between the [two] *thighs of the company of the gods.*[1285]

It was a *crescent* which divided the circular assembly into two portions, for the hieroglyphic symbol of paut, "company of the gods," is the crescent-enclosure .

The Two Lands

The celestial "Egypt," founded and ruled by the Universal Monarch, possessed two divisions, alternately termed "the right and left" or "the above and below." The priests of the Memphite doctrine announced: "Thus it was that Horus appeared as King of Upper Egypt and as King of Lower Egypt who united the Two Lands in the province of the (white) Wall at the place where the Two Lands are united."[1286]

The first king is the creator, and the "land" which he gathered together and unified is a twofold circle. Hence the Two Lands receive the title "the Two Ladies" (Isis and Nephthys) or appear as "the portions of Horus and Set,"[1287] or the twin circle of the gods.[1288]

In their organization of the terrestrial kingdom the Egyptians strove to reproduce the bisected enclosure, the ideal kingdom. Writes Frankfort: "The dualistic forms of Egyptian kingship did not result from historical incidents. They embody the peculiarly Egyptian thought that a totality comprises opposites . . . *A State dualistically conceived must have appeared to the Egyptians the manifestation of the order of creation* . . ."[1289]

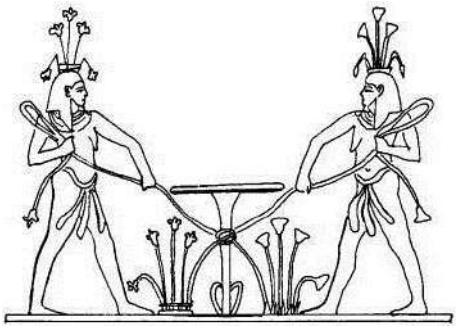


Figure 68. The Egyptian twin gods bind together the unified "land."

In the early ritual texts the phrase "Upper and Lower Egypt" consistently refers to the celestial kingdom, not local geography. When the *Pyramid Texts*, for example, declare that "the Two Lands shine again and he [the great god] clears the visions of the gods,"[1290] it should be obvious that they refer to the primordial dwelling above, rather than terrestrial Egypt.

The Two Crowns

1284 *Pyramid Text* 1087.

1285 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 594.

1286 Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 27.

1287 *Ibid*., 21-27.

1288 *Pyramid Text* 1297.

1289 *Op. cit.*, 19-20. [Emphasis added.]

1290 *Pyramid Text* 373.

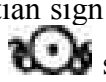
The god-king is "the Good Ruler who *appears in the Double Crown*, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands."[1291] No one reading these lines for the first time is likely to imagine that the "Double Crown" denoted the same dual enclosure as the "Two Lands." Yet, drawing on the cosmic imagery discussed in previous pages one perceives the influence of a single conception. Though the Two Lands are Isis and Nephthys, the same twins appear as two crowns worn by the god-king. ". . . [Y]our two mothers the two White Crowns caress you, your two mothers the two White Crowns kiss you . . ."[1292]

The Egyptians proclaimed that the two crowns composed the circle of glory (*khu*) which issued from the heart or head of the great god. "The two 'Great in Magic' [crowns] grew out of his head. Thus it was that Horus appeared as King of Upper Egypt and as King of Lower Egypt . . ."[1293] To acquire the two crowns was to unify the Two Lands.

The Two Eyes

"Thou didst stretch out the heavens wherein thy two eyes might travel," reads the *Book of the Dead*.[1294] The two eyes are simply the two halves of the singular revolving eye, personified by the cosmic twins. "Thine eyebrows are the two sister goddesses who are at peace with each other," reads the *Book of the Dead*.[1295] Isis and Nephthys are thus called "the two eyes" of Re.

The Two Serpents

If the Egyptian sign relates the circular serpent or uraeus to the band of the enclosed sun, the sign of the "two" uraei  shows the latter to be two halves of the same band—a fact which agrees with the title of Isis and Nephthys as "the two serpent-goddesses." "The goddess Nebt-Unnut is established upon thy head [as the crown] and her uraei of the South [Upper Egypt] and North [Lower Egypt] are upon thy brow."[1296] (The Two Lands compose the two uraei serpents, which the god-king wears as a double crown.)

The texts leave no doubt that the eye, crown, and circular serpent, each referring to the same enclosure around the light god, possessed a dual aspect, as two eyes, two crowns, and two serpents; and this twofold enclosure was the double circle of the gods (the Two Enneads) encircling the Two Lands.

O King, I provide you with the Eye of Horus, the Red Crown rich in power and many natured, that it may protect you, O king, just as it protects Horus; may it set your power, O King, at the head of the Two Enneads as the two serpent-goddesses who are on your brow, that they may raise you up.[1297]

Passing briefly to other forms of the primeval enclosure one finds the same connection with the celestial twins:

The Two Thrones

The king has come to his throne which is upon the Two Ladies.[1298]

The Two Vases (=Two Eyes)

1291 Piankoff, *The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 118. [Emphasis added.]

1292 *Pyramid Text* 310.

1293 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 27.

1294 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 87.

1295 *Ibid.*, 583.

1296 *Ibid.*, 72.

1297 *Pyramid Text* 901-2.

1298 *Pyramid Text* 263.

Take the two Eyes of Horus, the black and white; take them to your forehead that they may illuminate your face—the lifting up of a white jar and a black jar.[1299]

The Two Lakes or Rivers

I am born, I purify myself in the two great and mighty lakes in Heracleopolis . . .[1300]

O Destroyer who comest out of the Double Throne Lake.[1301]

He has circumambulated the Two Banks. [The Two Banks denoted the circle of Upper and Lower "Egypt," enclosed by the revolving river.][1302]

The Two Cords

Oh you two who are lifted up . . . , who make the metacord of the god . . .[1303]

These are the two knots of Elephantine which are in the mouth of Osiris.[1304]

Every mythical form of the primeval enclosure in Egypt appears as a twofold band, the circle of the celestial twins. The diverse figures of the twins, though complicating the symbolism, always point to the same root idea. The twins denote the revolving enclosure of the great god's dwelling in heaven, divided into equal portions of light and shadow. Neither Cook's identification of the twins as the abstract night and day sky, nor any other explanation based on the present celestial order, can account for the underlying identity of the twins as *a circle revolving around a central sun.*

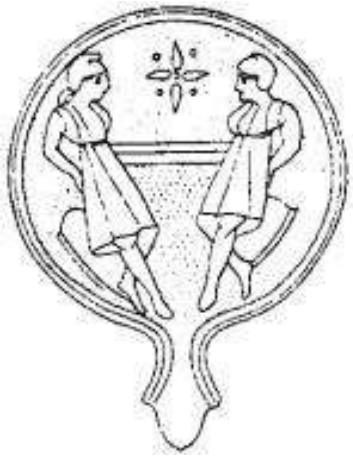


Figure 69. An Etruscan mirror depicts the Dioscuri to the right and left of a central "sun" or "star."

1299 *Pyramid Text* 33.

1300 Piankofff, *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 51.

1301 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 324.

1302 *Pyramid Text* 406.

1303 *Pyramid Text* 666.

1304 *Pyramid Text* 234.

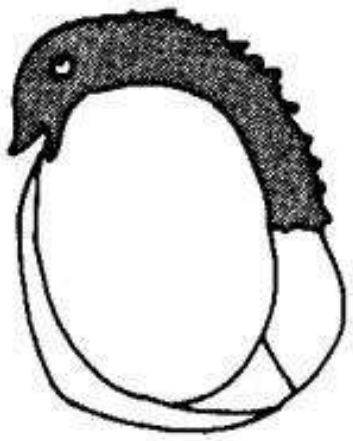


Figure 70. The Uruboros, identified as "the One, the All," half dark and half light. From the *Codex Marcianus* (11th century).

In numerous lands the great father appears to have his home within the embrace of celestial twins. Butterworth reports that ". . . From Asia Minor to Egypt, from Delos to Syria, reliefs and coins and other works of art and craftsmanship bear representations of a triad consisting of the Dioskoroi, the 'Heavenly Twins,' dispersed on either side of a divine figure . . ."[1305]

In Egyptian, Sumero-Babylonian, Iranian, Hindu, and Greek imagery the twins appear as twin doors (of the right and left) from which the sun shines forth.[1306]

The Gnostic uroborus or circular serpent is half black and half white and encloses the sun (fig. 70). The Muslim circular serpent, enclosing the Ka'ba and constituting the world ocean, "glitters" in the sun and is half white and half black.[1307] But the same twofold serpent will be found from China to the Americas (figs. 71, 72, 73, 74 & 75).

The world egg of Hindu, Greek, and Chinese symbolism is bisected into black and white semicircles. Hindu sources depict the primeval womb as "two bowls" which together form a single circle, half white, half black.[1308] The face of the Mexican mother goddess is half black, half white, resembling the black and white Greek Erinyes or the bright and dark aspects of the Greek goddess Demeter-Persephone.[1309]

Similarly, two winged goddesses turn the wheel of Ixion, just as two goddesses operate the wheel of the Icelandic world mill or the wheel of the Hindu Skambha.[1310]

The Babylonian Shamash and Tammuz rest within the mouth of the "twin rivers,"[1311] while the Canaanite El stands "at the sources of the Two Rivers, in the midst of the pools of the *Double*-Deep."[1312]

1305 *Op. cit.*, 101.

1306 Like the Egyptian Horus and Set the Babylonian gates of the right and left are "the twin fighters." Sayce, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, 492; Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 285.

1307 Wensinck, "The Ideas of the Western Semites," 64.

1308 Agrawala, *The Thousand Syllabled Speech*, 106.

1309 Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, 62, 163.

1310 Cook, *op. cit.*, 49.

1311 Wensinck, "The Ideas of the Western Semites," 169.

1312 Clifford, *op. cit.*, 49. [Emphasis added.]

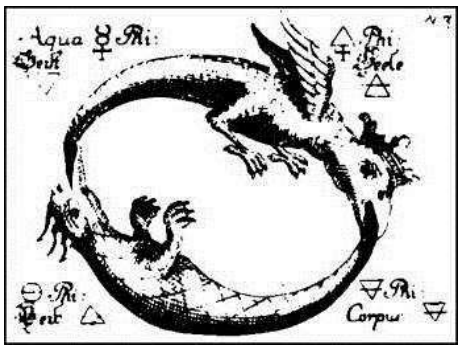


Figure 71. Twofold circular dragon in alchemist manuscript.

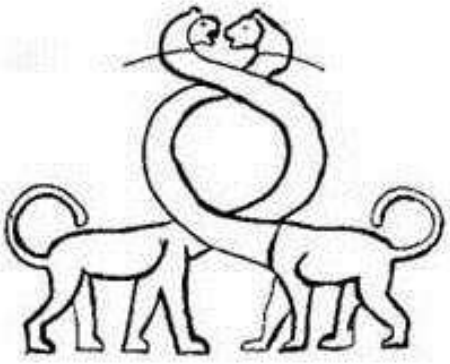


Figure 72. (a) Egyptian;

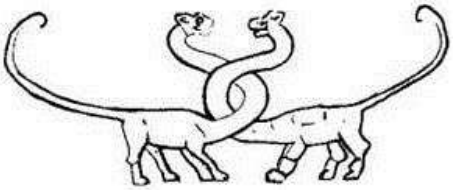


Figure 72. (b) Sumerian, and

Figure 72. (c) Malayan illustrations of the primeval twins reveal a remarkably similar concept. Together the twins form an enclosure.

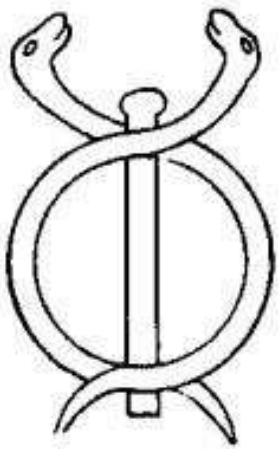


Figure 73. Buddhist Tri-Ratna.

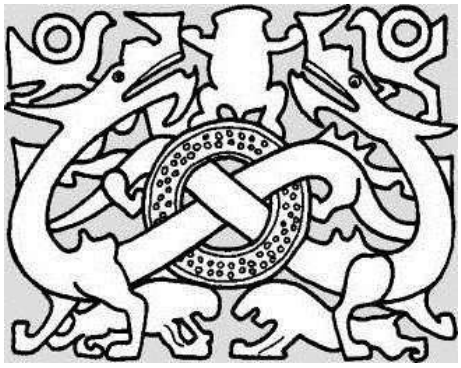


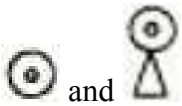
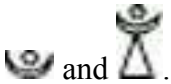
Figure 74. Chinese twin dragons, and the quartered circle.

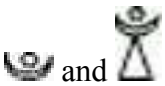
Figure 75. Twofold dragon from Honduras.

The band of the enclosed sun, whatever its mythical form, is consistently portrayed as a twofold circle, half black and half white. What defines the two divisions is the illuminated crescent , revolving about the band so as to alternately face "above and below" , or "left and right" , .

While ancient sources never question the dual character of the enclosure, the language of the two divisions is susceptible to considerable misunderstanding by anyone attempting to read it within the context of an assumed solar mythology or of local geography. (I examine these confusions in later sections on "Heaven and Earth" and "East and West.")

Symbolism Of The Crescent

The connection of the circumpolar enclosure with a crescent confirms that the images  pertained to the same celestial configuration as the images  . But just as the ancients interpreted the enclosure and cosmic mountain in different ways, should we not find that they expressed the crescent in varying forms also? In seeking to answer this question one must reckon with the most extraordinary aspects of the Saturnian imagery.

Of the crescent in the primary images  ancient sources present these basic forms:

—The horns of the bull-god (or cow-goddess).

—The great father's ship.

—The uplifted arms of the heaven-sustaining giant.

—The outstretched wings of the mother goddess (or winged god).

In the language of ancient ritual, "horns," "ships," "arms," and "wings" possess an underlying identity which defies all natural relationships between such concepts in the modern world. To reside within the wings of the mother goddess is to dwell upon the upraised arms of the Heaven Man. But these same wings, or arms, constitute the great god's sailing vessel—which in turn is depicted as two shining "horns." Let us examine the connection of these forms with the Saturnian configuration .

The Crescent Horn

In accord with the images and , the central sun appears as a horned god (the Bull of Heaven), while his spouse, the cow-goddess, encloses the sun-god within two horns.

Though extolled as the "sun," all figures of the great father possess the crescent "moon" as two horns, reigning over the first age as the generative Bull.

In Egypt, the "sun-gods" Re, Horus, Osiris, Amen, and Ptah all take the form of a horned god—the mighty "bull."[1313]

Osiris is the "son of Nut, lord of the two horns."[1314] The *Litany of Re* celebrates the god as the "supreme power, with attached head, with high horns."[1315] One of Re's epithets is simply "Shining Horn."[1316]

A chapter of the *Book of the Dead* begins: "I am the sharp-horned Bull, who regulateth the sky, the Lord of the risings in heaven, the great Giver of Light, who issueth from Flame."[1317]

"I am seated in front of the Great Ones like the horned Re," reads a *Coffin Text.*[1318] As the incarnation of the great god, the king acquires the title "Bull of Light."[1319]

1313 Briffault, *op. cit.*, 192.

1314 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 157; Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, 409.

1315 Piankoff, *The Litany of Re*, 24.

1316 *Ibid.*, 13.

1317 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 107.

1318 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 243.

It is the general consensus of Egyptologists that Re and his counterparts originated as solar gods. To what, then, do the sun-god's shining "horns" refer?

The characterization of the great god as a horned deity seems to be a general principle of ancient thought. A Babylonian hymn to Ramman (the "sun-god") begins: "O lord Ramman, thy name is the great god glorious bull, child of heaven . . . , lord of plenty."[1320] Anu, Ninurta, Enlil, and Enki all possess radiant horns. ". . . The sun, as the 'Bull of Light' [the very title of the Egyptian god-king], was accorded the supreme position in the Babylonian solar-god hierarchy," writes Conrad.[1321] But the *horns* of the Bull of Heaven are the crescent "moon":

Father Nannar, heavenly lord

. . . moon *god . . . lord of Ur . . .*

lord of the brilliant crescent . . .

O strong bull, great of horns.[1322]

Hindu sources depict Vishnu, Brahma, Shiva, Agni, and Indra as bulls with luminous horns. The Greek Dionysus (Latin Bacchus) is "the bull-horned god" said to have been born a "horned child." Adonis receives the same form. The Canaanite El is addressed as "Bull-god" while the Greek Kronos is "the horned god." If Yahweh was "the Bull of Israel," Helios was the "Adiounian bull."

From Africa to northern Europe to the Americas the archaic "sun"-god wears the horns of the crescent "moon."[1323]

In the myths of several lands the celestial bull appears in the guise of Heaven Man, his body providing the primeval matter of the Cosmos. A hymn of the Hindu *Atharva Veda*, titled "Extolling the Ox," identifies the various gods with the limbs of the cosmic bull: "Prajapati and the most exalted one are his two horns, Indra his head, Agni his forehead, Yama his neck-joint . . ." etc.[1324] The Persians knew this beast as the "Primal Bull" or "the Sole-Created Ox" dwelling in Eran Vej, the "central land"; his form was "white and brilliant as the moon." The world of the first man and first woman was created from his body.[1325]

There is only one sense in which the myth of the horned "sun" or great father will find meaningful interpretation. The horns belong to Saturn, the sun within the crescent-enclosure . If the Babylonians knew Saturn as Anu, "the horned one," the Phoenicians called the planet-god Ba'al Qarnaim, "Lord of the Two Horns."[1326] The Greek Saturn-name Kronos, according to Robert Brown, possesses the radical sense "the Horned."[1327]

1319 Hassan, *Hymnes Religieux du Moyen Empire*, 72.

1320 Conrad, *The Horn and the Sword*, 102.

1321 *Ibid.*, 39.

1322 *Ibid.*, 38. [Emphasis added.]

1323 Gelling, *The Chariot of the Sun*, 81-82; Bailey, *The God-Kings and the Titans*, 192.

1324 Whitney, *Atharva Veda*, Vol. II, 547.

1325 Campbell, *Occidental Mythology*, 204-5; Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, 191.

1326 Brown, *Researches into the Origins of the Primitive Constellations*, Vol. II, 183; Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, 554.

1327 *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, 3n.

Figure 76. Two Egyptian versions of the winged bull: **(a)** the Apis bull of Memphis;

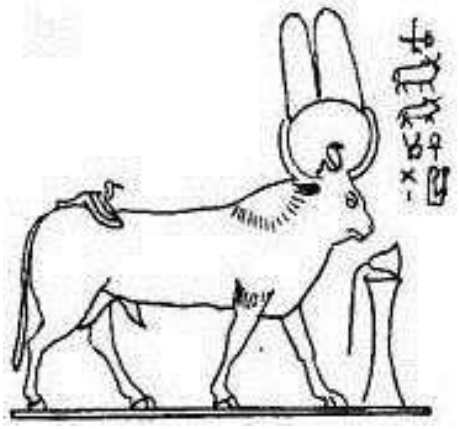


Figure 76. (b) the Bacchis bull of Hermonthis.

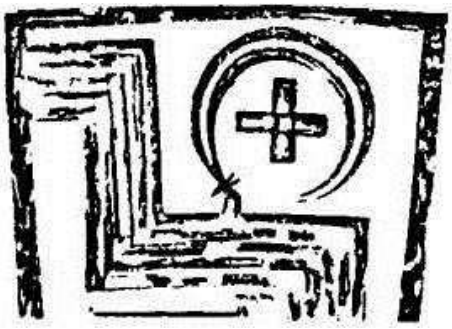


Figure 77. The horns of the celestial ibex (Mesopotamia) enclose the sun-cross. From a vase discovered at Susa.

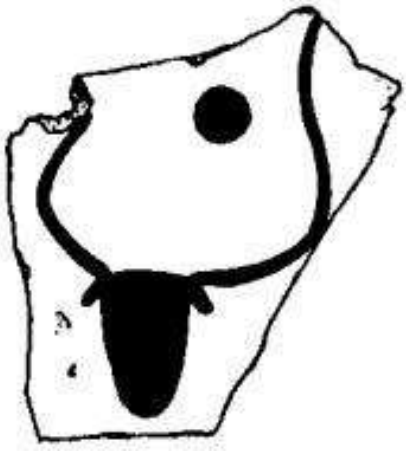


Figure 78. Bucranium design, Mesopotamia.

Figure 79. Fragment of painted vessel from Baluchistan, showing the "sun" between the borns of the bull.

Ancient Egyptian imagery is unvarying in connecting the horns with the Aten, the enclosure of the sun . In a *Coffin Text* the great god recalls the first occasion, "before the Aten had been fastened on the horns."1328 Another source describes the "Aten which is between his horns."1329 Pharaoh Thutmose I calls himself the god "Horus-Re, Mighty-Bull—the sun with sharp horns who comes out of the Aten."1330 Can one seriously doubt that such hymns refer to the light god within the crescent-enclosure ?

Two popular forms of the Egyptian horned god were the Apis Bull, worshipped at Memphis, and the Mnevis Bull of Heliopolis. Illustrations of these bull-gods confirm the very relationship of the horns and enclosure described in the hymns: the circle of the Aten rests firmly upon the bull's horns, offering the precise image . The Egyptian bull-god Bakha similarly wears the Aten between his two horns. The hieroglyphic symbol of the horned Aten is . (On the meaning of this imagery the specialists remain silent.) One of the hieroglyphic forms of the Aten has as its determinative the sign , signifying "the two-horned enclosure." That the mystic horns embrace or encircle the central sun is a principle reaching far beyond Egypt. In the famous horned cap of Mesopotamian divinities, "the horns were imagined as encircling the head of a divinity rather than springing out of it," writes Van Buren.1331 Sometimes the symbolic horns in Mesopotamia are not those of a bull but rather of an ibex, a heavenly beast whom the myths call the "Ibex of the Apsu [cosmic ocean]."1332 Vase paintings show the horns of the ibex encircling the sun-cross1333 (fig. 77). Elsewhere the "sun" appears between the horns of a bull (figs. 78, 79).

In Egyptian and Scandinavian rock drawings the "sun" rests between the horns of bovine figures, and the illustrations often emphasize the horns' character as an enclosure by drawing them full circle (figs. 84, 87). Correspondingly, a poem of the East African Didinga extols the:

1328 Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, 88.

1329 Piankoff, *Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 125.

1330 Piankoff, *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 6.

1331 "Concerning the Horned Cap of the Mesopotamian Gods," 319. See Hans Henning Van Der Osten, *op. cit.*, fig. 22, no. 114, 116, 128, 153, 168.

1332 Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, xii.

1333 Jeremias, *op. cit.*, 99, fig. 70.

White Cow of heaven, your horns have curved full circle and are joined as one.[1334]

In the same vein the Hindu *Atharva Veda* recalls "The ruddy one, the sharp-horned bull, who encompassed Agni, the sun."[1335] The Iranian Verethraghna, who bears the "glory" (halo) of Ahura Mazda, possesses "the shape of a wild beautiful ram, with horns bent round."[1336]

The horns which are "bent round" will be the crescent-enclosure, the dwelling of the central sun —which is to say, the horns are inseparable from the womb of the mother goddess. Hence the Egyptian sign , which neatly expresses the crescent's mythical aspect as two horns, denotes the goddess Hathor, the "House of Horus." Because Hathor is the goddess of the horned womb, there is no contradiction between the hymns locating Re "in the *womb* of thy mother Hathor" and the representations of the goddess as "sky-cow who bears the sun-god *between her horns*."[1337]

In the same way, Hathor is at once the Eye of Re and the horns supporting the Eye: "I am that eye of yours which is on the horns of Hathor," reads a *Pyramid Text*.[1338] One of the names of the Egyptian goddess is simply "Horns, Lady of Purification."[1339]

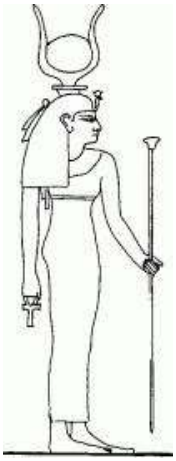


Figure 80. The goddess Hathor, wearing the horned Aten.

Closely paralleling this title of Hathor is the name of the Mesopotamian goddess: "the Lady with the horned countenance."[1340] The Sumerian goddess Inanna describes her own womb as "a horn,"[1341] while the related Phoenician goddess Ashtoreth appears as "Queen of heaven with crescent horns" or "Ashtoreth of the double horn."[1342] A horn, in the Hindu *Satapatha Brahmana*, means the womb of primeval genesis. ". . . The black deer's horn is the same as that womb," states the text. The priest "touches with it [the horn] his forehead close over the right eyebrow, with the text, 'Thou art Indra's womb'—for it is indeed Indra's womb, since in

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1334 Conrad, *The Horn and the Sword*, 89.

1335 Whitney, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 714.

1336 Darmesteter, *The Zend Avesta*, Part II, 237.

1337 Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth*, 48. [Emphasis added.]

1338 *Pyramid Text* 705.

1339 Piankoff, *The Wandering of the Soul*, 10.

1340 Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, 149.

1341 Kramer, *The Sacred Marriage Rite*, 59.

1342 Sayce, *op. cit.*, 256.

entering it he enters thereby, and in being born he is born therefrom: therefore he says, 'Thou art Indra's womb.'"[1343]

It makes no difference whether the horns are those of a bull, cow, ram, antelope, deer, goat, or buffalo. The vital idea was of a horned enclosure, and ancient nations inheriting the tradition obviously adapted the celestial horn to animal forms most familiar to them.

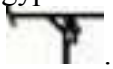
The Horned Mountain

In the *Pyramid Texts*, the king returns to the womb of his birth, with the words: "I have joined my mother the Great Wild Cow. O my mother, the Wild Cow which is upon the Mountain . . ."[1344] "Homage to thee, Re, supreme power, Shining Horn, Pillar of Amentet," reads the *Litany of Re*.[1345] The Bakha bull, which supports the Aten between its horns, is "the Bull of the two Mountains."

That the horns of the bull or cow constitute the two peaks of the cosmic mountain can alone explain such imagery. *The Bull of Heaven, in its original form, is nothing more than a horned pillar*—as is made clear in a *Pyramid Text* addressing "the Pillar of the Stars . . . , the Pillar of Kenset, the Bull of Heaven."[1346] This is the bull "whose horns shine, the (well) anointed pillar, the Bull of Heaven."[1347]

In truth, all that distinguishes the horned Aten from the "Mount of Glory" hieroglyph is the mythical form in which the recumbent crescent found expression. Mythically, the crescent was viewed as both a split peak *and* two horns.

Indeed, one finds that the Egyptian priests had no doubts about the identity of the horns and the cleft summit, for the two symbols constantly overlap in Egyptian art. Sometimes the head of a bull is placed between the two peaks of the mountain symbol , with the Aten resting on the bull's two horns (figs. 81, 82).

In an early period, the Egyptians represented the twin peaks by the image , locating the cleft summit atop the primeval "pedestal"  . At other times, however, they showed a bull resting on the pedestal with the mountain sign displaced to the side (fig. 83). Clearly, the artists recognized the overlapping meanings of the two symbols.

Often, in fact, the mountain sign is drawn so as to appear *more like horns than two hills* (fig. 85b), and this image, as noted by Percy Newberry some time ago, is virtually identical to the Cretan "horns of consecration" discussed by Sir Arthur Evans in his now-famous work, "The Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult"[1348] (fig. 85a) Thus G.E. Smith observes the "*identity* of what Evans calls the 'horns of consecration' and the [Egyptian] 'mountains of the horizon.'"[1349] (By "mountains of the horizon" Smith means, of course, the two-peaked Mount of Glory.)

1343 Eggeling, *Satapatha-Brahamna* II, Part II, 33.

1344 *Pyramid Text* 389.

1345 Piankoff, *Litany of Re*, 26.

1346 *Pyramid Text* 280, in Piankoff, *The Pyramid of Unas*.

1347 *Pyramid Text* 282-83.

1348 Newberry, "Two Cults of the Old Kingdom," 24*ff*.

1349 *Op. cit.*, fig. 26.

Figure 81. Illustration of the Aten (circular serpent) from the *Papyrus Of Her-Uben* shows the overlapping interpretations of the Aten's crescent as a twin-peaked mountain, the horns of a cosmic bull, and twin loins (Aker).

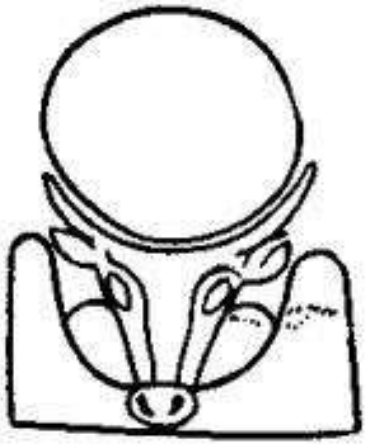
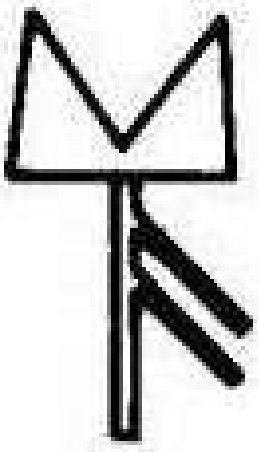


Figure 82. To show the identity of the Aten's crescent-horns and the twin peaks, Egyptian artists placed the bull's head between the two peaks.

Perceiving the horns as the cleft summit of the pillar sustaining the Cosmos , one can understand the spell of the *Coffin Texts*, which reads: "I am the Bull, the Old One of Kenzet [*Kenset*, the horned pillar] . . . I support the sky with my horns."1350



1350 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 148.

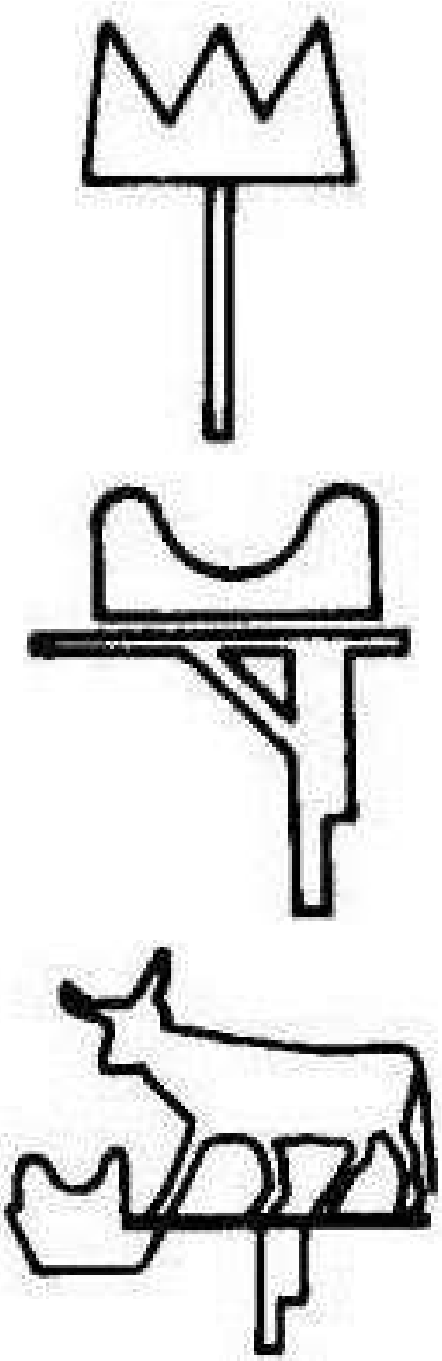
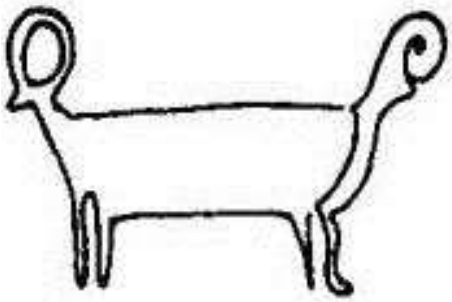


Figure 83. Prehistoric Egyptian symbols for the two-peaked mount.



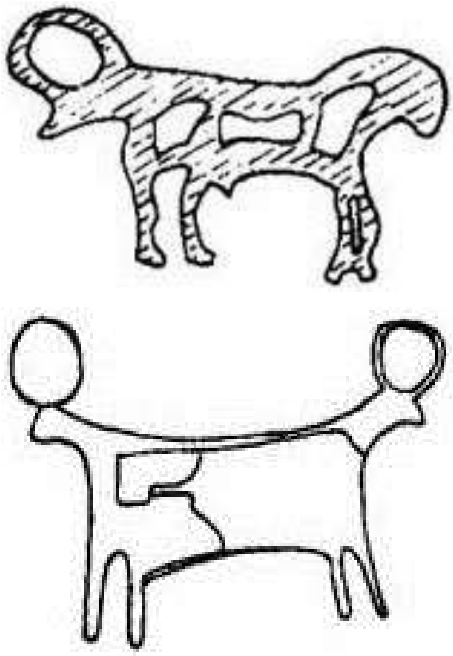


Figure 84. By indicating the horns as a full circle, prehistoric Egyptian pictures of the cosmic bull (or twin bulls) emphasize the connection of the horns with the celestial enclosure.

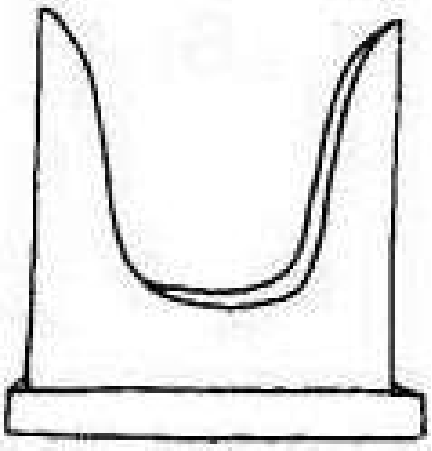


Figure 85. (a) Cretan "horns of consecration";

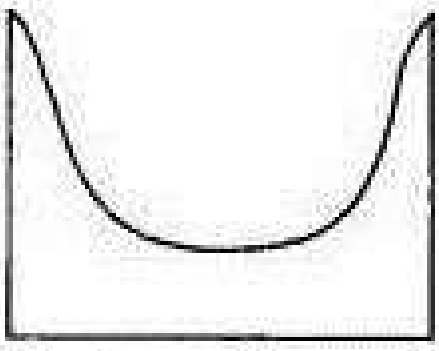


Figure 85. (b) Egyptian "cleft peak."

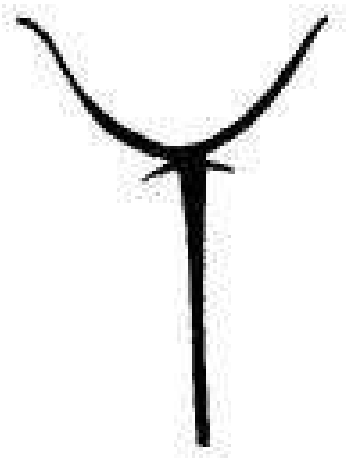


Figure 86. Mesopotamian horned pillar.

The Sumero-Babylonians personified the heaven-sustaining peak Hursag as the mountain giant Enlil, also a *horned* pillar:

O great Enlil, im-hur-sag [Great Mountain]

whose head rivals the heavens,

whose foundation is laid in the pure abyss,

Whose horns *gleam like the rays of the Sun-god.*[1351]

Both Egyptian and Mesopotamian sources give the heaven-sustaining mountain shining horns! The name of the Babylonian antediluvian king Alaparos derives from *alap*, "bull" and *ur*, "foundation." He is the "Bull of the Foundation."[1352]

1351 Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 99. [Emphasis added.]

1352 Brown, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 56.

Figure 87. Variations of the cosmic bull in Scandinavian rock drawings. At root the bull is the pillar and crescent-enclosure.

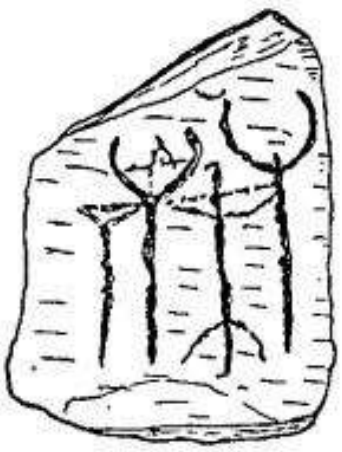


Figure 88. Rock picture from Germany, identified by Herbert Kuhn as "stylized oxen."

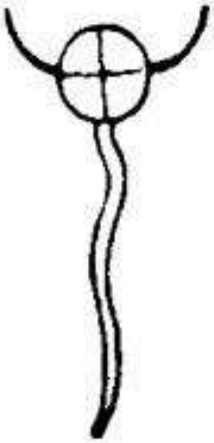


Figure 89. American Indian horned enclosure, resting on erect serpent.

Thus the paradisal "earth" rested upon the crescent-horns. The Babylonians called the horned pillar the "Great Bull, the most great Bull, stamping at the holy gates . . . director of Abundance, who supports the god Nirba . . ."[1353] Lenormant comments: "This bull thus plays the role of a kind of Atlas, bearing the earth and its harvests upon his shoulders."[1354] But the primeval "earth," as we have seen, was simply Saturn's Cosmos.

Many Siberian legends speak of a primeval bull supporting the "world."[1355] Hebrew and Muslim traditions place a bull atop the serpent-dragon Leviathan (here a symbol of the heavens pillar). The bull supports the earth on its shoulders.[1356] The ram's horn of the Germanic Heimdal holds fast the rim of the world.[1357]

We consider again the Mesopotamian symbol of the quartered earth upon its pillar . What is astonishing about this symbol is that it exactly corresponds to the mythical image of the bull, or horned pillar, holding aloft the cosmic enclosure (with four streams of life) and supporting the sun-god between its horns. To my knowledge, however, no one has yet proposed any connection between this sign and the myths.

1353 Lenormant, *Les Origines*, Vol. I, 116.

1354 *Ibid.*

1355 Uno Holmberg, *Siberian Mythology*, 331-2.

1356 Wensinck, "*The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites*," 3.

1357 Perry, *Lord of the Four Quarters*, 182.

As our earth turned on its axis, the crescent-horn must have visually appeared to revolve around the enclosure , , , . "The Great Bull of Osiris circles around!" proclaims a text from the *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon.*[1358] Two lines from the *Book of the Dead* suggest the same thing: "I am the steer . . . I go round the Sekhet-Aaru [the circular plain of abundance]."[1359]

Accordingly, the revolving horns mark out a twofold enclosure. One of the earliest symbols of the Two Lands is a double-headed cow, facing to the right and left.[1360](fig. 90) The *Pyramid Texts* call this "the two bulls within the Ibis."[1361] The reference is more significant than one might recognize at first glance, for the ibis encompassing the two twins is the god Thoth—whose symbol is the crescent-enclosure —:

"I have come and I have installed this house of mine . . . The door which is on it is two opposing bulls," reads a *Pyramid Text.*[1362] Together the "opposing" horns of the left and right , distinguish the full circle of the "door."

To anyone perceiving the role of the Egyptian "two Bulls" as two halves of the sun's enclosure (the door or gate through which the sun comes forth), it is impossible to overlook the corresponding imagery of two bulls in Mesopotamia, guarding the gates of the palace or temple. These are the "two bulls of the gate of the temple of E-Shakil," the "two bulls of the gate of Ea," or the "two bulls of the gate of the goddess Damkina."[1363]

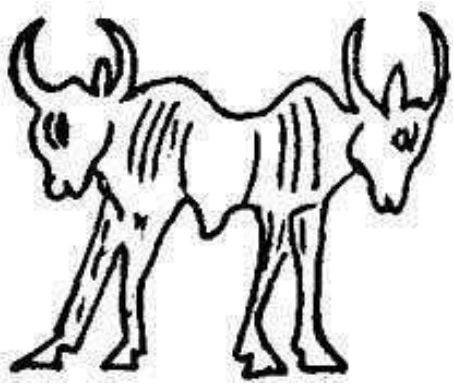


Figure 90. The Egyptian twin-headed bull, symbol of the "Two Lands."

1358 Piankoff, *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 84.

1359 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 114-15.

1360 Mackenzie, *The Migration of Symbols*, 18.

1361 *Pyramid Text* 425.

1362 *Pyramid Text* 1266. Another text reads: "See among whom this King stands, the horns on his head being those of two wild bulls, for you are a black ram, the son of a black ewe, whom a white ewe bore." *Pyramid Text* 252. In this hymn one discerns the two primary forms of the cosmic twins. The twins, as the two "wild" or fighting bulls, are simply aspects of a singular horned god, whose horns alternately face opposing directions. But the twins also have to do with a circle half light and half shadow, and this bisected enclosure is the womb of the great gods birth. Hence he is "the son of a black ewe, whom a white ewe bore."

1363 Lenormant, *Les Origines*, Vol. I, 114. In the symbolism of the Hindu *Rig Veda* it is the universal Bull and Cow who together compose the primeval womb. They "are like two inverted bowls uniting to form a common womb," writes Agrawala. *Thousand Syllabled Speech*, 106.

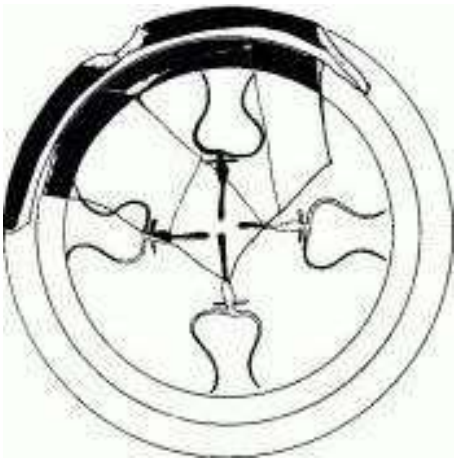


Figure 91. Mesopotamian design conveying the image of the primeval enclosure and revolving horns.

As to the primary meanings of the horned god or goddess ancient sources do not equivocate: mythically, the horns signify the revolving crescent reaching around the primeval enclosure and seeming to "support" or "embrace" the sun-god. The horns compose the two peaks of the cosmic mountain. And in their opposing positions around the central sun, they are identified as the cosmic twins, the "opponent gods."

X: The Crescent-Ship (Part 2)

All ancient sun gods sail in a celestial ship. In the oldest ritual the ship appears as a crescent revolving around the circle of the great god's dwelling, while the god himself remains stationary. The ship's "mooring post" (and, by extension, its "mast") is the cosmic mountain.

One of Saturn's most extraordinary possessions is the ark of heaven. Saturn is "literally represented as sailing over the ocean in a ship," remarks Faber.[1364] Ovid tells us that because the planet-god traversed the entire sphere of the "earth" in his primordial voyage, his special token was a ship, and this is the ship which appears on the reverse of coins stamped with the double face of Janus.[1365] The latter god, as Saturn's alter ego, was the "inventor" of barks and ships.[1366]

All of the Saturnian gods of the Sumero-Babylonian pantheon sail in a celestial ship, one of whose names is *Magula-anna*, "Great boat of Heaven." The "beloved ship" of Ningirsu is "the one that rises up out of the dam of the deep."[1367] Ea rides "the ship of the antelope of the Apsu,"[1368] while Ninurta sails in the ship Magur.

The Chinese Huang-ti—the planet Saturn—was the first to sail in a ship. In his journey across the ocean, Hercules rode in a "golden goblet"—the ship of Helios (Saturn)—to which one naturally compares the "new-moon" boat of Dionysus. A ship of "self-made light" transports the Avestan great god Yima (Saturn).

The Phoenician great father Chrysor "was the first man who fared in ships,"[1369] but it was also said that the twin god Ousoos "was the first who launched a boat."[1370] The Japanese creator god Sukuna-Biko-Na rides "on the crest of the waves in a heavenly *Kagami* boat."[1371] "A golden ship of golden tackle moved about in the sky," reads the Hindu *Atharva Veda*.[1372]

Natives of the Marquesas say that in the beginning there was only the sea on which the creator Tiki floated in a canoe.[1373] The Hawaiian god Tanaroa sailed above in a "flying canoe,"[1374] much like the great shaman of

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1364 *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, 495.

1365 Cited in *ibid.*

1366 *Ibid.*

1367 Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 654.

1368 Langdon, *op. cit.*, 106.

1369 Brown, *Eradinus: River and Constellation*, 12.

1370 Brown, *Researches*, Vol I, 39.

1371 Philippi, *The Kojiki*, 115.

1372 Whitney, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 227.

1373 Dixon, *Oceanic Mythology*, 20.

1374 Melville, *Children of the Rainbow*, 37.

the Yenisei Ostiaks, who "rows his boat in heaven." The legendary Hiawatha navigated "a white canoe which moved without human aid."[1375]

That the original form of the sun-god's ship was a *crescent* is a fact disputed by no one. The crescent form prevails in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, India, Greece, Scandinavia, and even in the Americas, leading to the popular belief that the mythical sun voyages in the "ship of the new moon."

This opinion is due to one fact alone: the new moon is the only crescent familiar to the modern age. Yet so routine is the identification of the crescent-ship with our moon that mythologists give almost no attention to specific imagery suggesting a radically different interpretation.

Having observed the "unorthodox" role of the crescent-horn, it is appropriate to note first that ancient symbolism always equates the great god's ship with the bull or cow of heaven. Prehistoric drawings from Egypt continually relate the ship to a horned creature and later Egyptian art continued the theme.[1376]

Figure 92. The Mesopotamian great gods sail in the horned ship.

The same connection occurs in many Scandinavian rock drawings. A rock picture from the Nubian desert south of Kerma shows the ship so placed on the back of a bull that the boat and the galloping animal are one.[1377]

The Sumero-Babylonian Nannar or Sin, esteemed as the bull with glistening horns, is also "the shining bark of the heavens."[1378] "May you ferry over by means of the Great Bull," reads an Egyptian *Pyramid Text.*[1379] Another declares: "the Bull of the sky has bent down his horn that he may pass over thereby . . . ,"[1380] while a *Coffin Text* celebrates the "long-horn which supports the *bark* of Anubis."[1381]

Many years ago G.S. Faber, examining ancient symbolism of the ship, wrote: "A heifer seems to have been adopted as perhaps the most usual emblem of the Ark . . . That the heifer was an emblem of the Ark appears from a very curious passage in *The Etymological Magnum*, the author of which informs us, that Theba, in the Syrian dialect, signified 'a heifer' . . . The import, however, of Theba, in the Hebrew language, is 'an ark'; and

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1375 Alexander, *North American Mythology*, 52.

1376 Winkler, *Rock Drawings of Southern Egypt*, no. 17, 22, and inset, pl. xxxiii; Piankoff, *Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 153.

1377 Campbell, *Oriental Mythology*, 69-70.

1378 Jeremias, *op. cit.*, 243.

1379 *Pyramid Text* 792.

1380 *Pyramid Text* 1433.

1381 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 279. [Emphasis added.]

the only reason why a heifer was designated by the same appellation, was the circumstance of its being used as an arkite emblem."[1382]

If the crescent-horn is that which embraces the enclosed sun and visually revolves around the band each day, the ship of heaven must be the same crescent.

Direct confirmation comes from ancient Egypt. Though the Egyptian ship (as depicted in the reliefs) always possesses the crescent form, it revolves in a circle: ". . . the ark of heaven was the revolving sphere configurated as a sailing vessel . . . the ark is portrayed in the act of sailing over a vast unfathomable hollow void," writes Massey.[1383]

Perhaps the most common Egyptian word for "to sail" is *seqet*, from the root *qet*, "a circle" (written with the determinative). Literally, *seqet* means "to go in a circle" (compare *seqeti*, "encircled"). Hence one text declares that "the barge *circles* in the sky,"[1384] while another extols "the *circlings* of the henhenu-bark"[1385] (*henhenu* is a name of the circular ocean above).

But what was the nature of the ship's circular pathway? The ship sails around the sun-god's enclosure: "I stand up in thy enclosure, O Maa; I sail round about."[1386] Chapter CXXXVI of the *Book of the Dead* is thus entitled "The Chapter of Sailing in the Great Boat of Re to Pass over the Circle of Bright Flame."[1387] Moreover, this connection of the crescent-boat with an *enclosure* will be found also in Mesopotamia. Though the crescent of Sin was the *ma-gur* boat possessed by Ninurta (Saturn), the sign for *gur* means "circular enclosure."[1388]

Is there any direct statement that the enclosure depicted in the sign is the ship's pathway? The Egyptians called the band Aten or *khu* ("glory," "halo"): "Hail to you who sails in his Khu, who navigates a circle within his Aten," reads the *Book of the Dead.*[1389]

Clearly, the subject is the crescent-enclosure. In the *Pyramid Texts*, King Unas announces, "I revolve round heaven like Re, I sail round heaven like Thoth." While Re's image is the Aten , the common symbol of Thoth is the crescent-enclosure . Allowing the one image to explain the other, we see that Unas does not here engage in two separate acts, but in a single act depicted in two different ways: to revolve within the Aten is to sail in the crescent-ship of Thoth.[1390]

The circle of the Aten is the "brow" of Re, and it is on Re's brow that the texts locate the ship: "I fly up and perch myself upon the forehead of Re, in the bows of his boat which is in heaven," states the *Book of the Dead.*[1391]

1382 *A Dissertation on the Cabiri*, Vol I, 177-78.

1383 *Op. cit.*, 576.

1384 Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri*, citing a text from the *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*. [Emphasis added.]

1385 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 149. [Emphasis added.]

1386 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 488.

1387 *Ibid.*, 411.

1388 Vanderburgh, *Sumerian Hymns from Cuneiform Texts in the British Museum*, 44.

1389 Cf. Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 83.

1390 *Pyramid Text*.

1391 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 443, citing the *Book of the Dead*, Chapter LXVI.

"Thou sailest on high in the Evening Barge, thou joinest the followers of the Aten,"[1392] To appreciate this line from the *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon* one must recognize that the "followers" themselves compose the enclosure of the Aten; the great god in the ship resides within the circle of lesser gods. It is the same thing to say that the secondary gods, by forming the enclosure, stand on the "pathway" of the ship, as stated in the *Coffin Texts*: "Every god who is on the border of your enclosure is on the path of your boat."[1393] Could one ask for a more explicit statement equating the enclosure and the revolving ship?

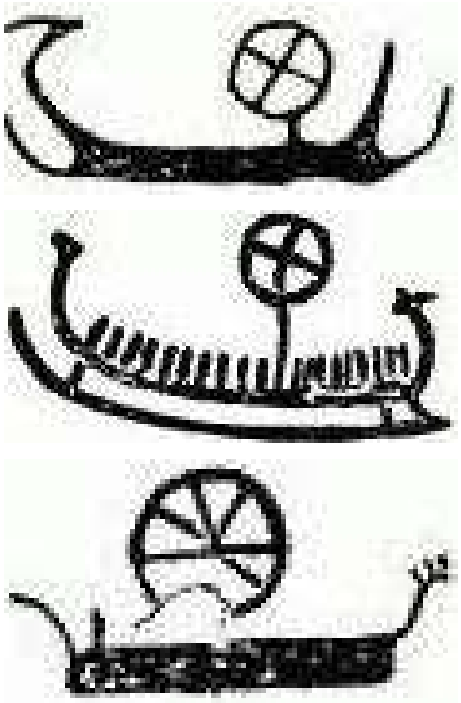

Figure 93. The "sun"-wheel resting in the cosmic ship, as depicted in Scandinavian rock drawings.

It is clear from the Egyptian sources that the ship and the secondary gods (the ship's crew), in revolving around the Aten, circumscribe the great god, who resides in the centre of the circle:

I cause Truth [maat] *to circle about at the*
head of the great barge which carries the
Justified One in the council . . .
The crew of Re circles about.[1394]
The dwellers in the Sektet Boat go
round about thee . . .[1395]

This, then, is the *only* sense in which the central sun "moves": he sails around the enclosure , while yet remaining *em hetep*, "at rest" or "in one place." The ship is thus "the Boat of Rest [*Hetep*]."[1396]

O God Re, grant thou that the Osiris Nu may travel on in thy boat em hetep.[1397]

[1392] Piankoff, *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 72.

[1393] Lacau, *op. cit.*, 33.

[1394] Piankoff, *Wandering of the Soul*, 27.

[1395] Budge, *From Fetish to God*, 401.

[1396] Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 250.

[1397] Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 410.

Let me embark in thy boat, O Re, em hetep.[1398]

Thy resting place is the barge of Khepri.[1399]

Agreeing with this view of the ship and pathway are the many hymns and liturgies which describe the boat of heaven navigating the circular ocean. (As earlier observed, this revolving river was the circle of the Aten .)

I have made my way and gone round the heavenly ocean on the path of the bark of Re.[1400]

Lo, I sail the great Bark on the Stream of the god Hetep.[1401]

Other hymns similarly depict the ship going around the "Lake of the Tuat," "the Pool of Maat," or "the Pool of Fire."[1402]

This cosmic ocean, lake, or river means the circular womb (or body) of the mother goddess. Hence, the goddess Nut, the enclosure around the sun-god Re, takes the form of the circumambient sea, and numerous reliefs show the sun-god's boat *sailing over the body of the goddess*. "I am a Sahu, who assigneth the bounds as he saileth round the starry throng of Heaven, the body of my mother Nut," states the *Book of the Dead*.[1403]

But it is not sufficient to identify the mother goddess as the pathway of the crescent-ship, for the crescent and enclosure are one: *the ship is the goddess*. Though Nut is the "pathway," the deceased king beseeches the goddess:

"Row me, O mother of mine; tow me, O abode of mine."[1404]

"O Boat of the sky . . . O Boat of Nut."[1405]

Similarly, the "ship of Hathor," as stated by Bleeker, was "the expression of her being. When the boat was carried in procession, it was the dramatization of the deity's hierophany."[1406] One of the names of the Hathor-ship is "mistress of love"; it is called "the boat which exalts her beauty."[1407] A ship was also the symbol of the goddess Isis.[1408] The dweller in the primeval womb is the captain of the ship.

A survey of ship symbolism in other lands will reveal the same identity. The womb of the Sumerian Inanna is "a ship."[1409] "The ship of the brilliant off-spring" was an epithet of the Babylonian goddess Bau.[1410] In

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1398 *Ibid.*, 398.

1399 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 239.

1400 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 86.

1401 *Ibid.*, 193.

1402 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 97, 135, 515, etc.

1403 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 131.

1404 *Pyramid Text* 303.

1405 Budge, *Osiris: the Egyptian Religion of Resurrection*, Vol. I, 118.

1406 *Op. cit.*, 61.

1407 *Ibid.*, 60, 89.

1408 Faber, *Origins*, Vol. III, 24-27.

1409 Kramer, *The Sacred Marriage Rite*, 59, 64.

1410 Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 655.

Hindu myth the goddesses Ila, Isi, Lacshmi, and Parvati are synonymous with the ship Argha,[1411] transporting the great father (Manu, Shiva, Brahma) over the waters. Bergelmir—the Norse mythical giant—"was born in a boat"[1412] (*i.e.*, boat=womb). The Latin goddess Minerva "was surnamed Ergane, from Ereg or Erech, the 'ark'; under which title she was venerated both in Laconia, and in Boeotia," Faber tells us.[1413] The Celtic Goddess Ceridwen takes the form of a ship,[1414] and the ship was the symbol of the old Latin goddess Ceres (Demeter), the Phrygian goddess Cybele, and the Phoenician goddess Ashtoreth.[1415]

The ship, in other words, is part and parcel of the circumpolar enclosure. And the identity finds confirmation in all mythical formulations of the enclosure:

The World-Ship

The Egyptian ship is "the Barge of Earth." "O gods who carry the Barge of Earth, who support the barge of the Tuat," proclaims the *Book of Gates*.[1416]

While the name of the Hindu goddess Ida (or (Ila) means "the world," she is depicted as a floating ship; Stonehenge, the famous Druidic monument, was called at once "the circle of the World," "the enclosure of the ship-goddess Ceridwen," and the "Ark of the World."[1417]

The ship-goddess is none other than the mother earth in heaven.

The Island-Ship

Ancient history is filled with legends of floating, paradisal islands, of which the Greek Delos and Hindu "island of the Moon" are noteworthy examples. The Italian floating isle of Cotyle; the Egyptian floating island of Chemnis, described by Herodotus; and the Celtic floating island of Snowdon suggest a common theme.[1418]

The tradition of the island-ship receives remarkable expression in the Roman island of Tiber, which, as a monument to Asclepius, was fashioned with a breastwork of marble into the form of a ship, its upper part imitating the stern and its lower part the bow.[1419] Fig. 94, taken from Carl Kerenyi's *Asklepios*, shows the ancient form of Tiber Island as reconstructed by a sixteenth-century draftsman.[1420] Symbolized is the island of the blessed resting within the vast crescent of the cosmic ship.

1411 Faber, *Origins*, Vol. I, 330, 385; Vol. III, 43, 63.

1412 MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, 275.

1413 *A Dissertation*, Vol. I, 106.

1414 Faber, *Origins*, Vol. I, 330, 363, 384.

1415 *Ibid.*, Vol. III, 28-33.

1416 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 153.

1417 Faber, *Origins*, Vol. I, 330; Vol. III, 30, 230. So also does the world navel appear in the form of a ship. Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 355*ff.*;

1418 Faber, *Origins*, Vol. III, 222-27, 40-41, 89*ff.*

1419 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 263.

1420 Kerenyi, *Asklepios*, 5, fig. 3.

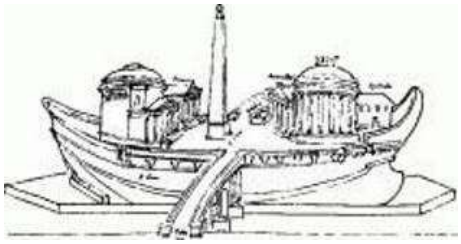


Figure 94. The city-ship of Tiber island, as reconstructed by a draftsman in the sixteenth century.

The City-Ship

The Egyptians commemorated the ship's daily revolution by fashioning an image of the great god's barge, placing it on a sledge-shaped stand, and *dragging it around the walls of the city*[1421]—for the city wall denoted the primeval rampart, the path of the ship. "This Great God travels in this city, on the water," states one text.[1422] Thus, the Mesopotamian Surripak is "the city of the Ship," corresponding to Homer's Mycenae, the "ark-city." The Greek cities of Thebes, Argos, and Berytus are connected by Faber with the ancient "ship" names *theba*, *argha*, and *baris* or *barit*.[1423]

The Temple-Ship

Just as the Egyptians conveyed the sacred ship around the wall of the city so did they also pull it around the wall of the *temple*, in imitation of the cosmic ship which coursed daily around the great god's dwelling. Egyptian illustrations depict the shrine as an inseparable part of the boat. And the texts confirm this connection: "The Sektet boat receiveth fair winds, and the heart of him who is *in the shrine thereof* rejoiceth."[1424]

A Sumerian hymn to the Kes temple equates the dwelling with "the princely Magur-boat, floating in the sky."[1425]

Good temple, built on a good place,

Kes temple, built on a good place,

Like [or as] *the princely Magur-boat, floating in the sky.*

Like the pure Magur-boat . . .

Like the boat of heaven, foundation of all the lands,

Cabin of the banda-boat which shines from the beaches,

Temple, roaring like an ox, bellowing like a breed bull.[1426]

The Greeks designated a temple and a ship by the same word, *naus* or *naos*. Our word *nave* (from the Latin *navis*) possesses the dual significance of a temple and a ship.[1427]

The Wheel-Ship

1421 Piankoff, *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 66.

1422 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 273.

1423 *A Dissertation*, Vol. I, 177-78.

1424 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 13. [Emphasis added.]

1425 Gragg, *The Kes Temple Hymn*, 168.

1426 *Ibid.*

1427 Faber gives several examples of ship-temples from India, Italy, and Ireland. *Origins*, Vol. II, 288-89.

One of the most unnatural aspects of the great god's "chariot" (wheel) is that it functions also as a ship. In commemoration of the god's remarkable vehicle, the ancients often placed the sacred ship on wheels, drawing it on *dry land.* Scandinavian rock carvings depict the "wheel of the sun" resting in a cosmic boat (fig. 93), and from Assyria to Britain to Polynesia images of cosmic ships either contain wheels or are set on wheels. The vehicle of the Chinese Huang-ti was both a ship and a chariot.1428 Similarly, the Sumerian magur-boat receives the appellation "chariot." Cosmic ship and world wheel are one.

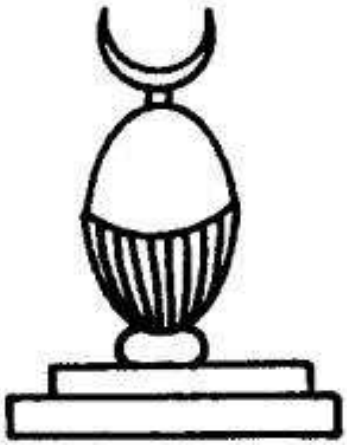


Figure 95. Egg of Lunus.

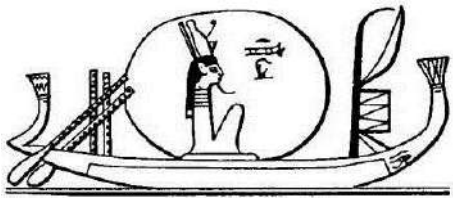


Figure 96. Atum, seated within the Aten, sails in the ship of the Eye.

The Egg-Ship

"The god Lunus of Heliopolis and Carrhae," writes Faber, "was an egg, on the top of which rested a crescent formed like a boat."1429 (fig. 95) But the god whom classical writers translated as Lunus was the Egyptian Aah, or Thoth, whose hieroglyph was the crescent-enclosure , and one can reasonably assume that, in accord with this symbol, the egg originally stood within, or upon, the crescent boat. Thus the Hindus knew the ship Argha as the lower half of a primeval egg which floated on the waters of Chaos.1430

The Eye-Ship

An Egyptian *Coffin Text* speaks of "the barge, the Eye of thy father."1431 Elsewhere one finds, "I am the Great One in the midst of his Eye, sitting and kneeling in the great barge of Khepri [the Turning One]."1432 "O you who are in the Eye of the Bark of the God."1433 In precise accord with such language the symbolic Eye was regularly inscribed upon ships of Egypt (fig. 96). Interestingly, the same symbol appears on the Greek Argo. A

1428 O'Neill, *Night of the Gods*, 585; see references in Nibley, "Tenting, Toll, and Taxing," 602, note 19.

1429 *Origins*, Vol. I, 195; see plate I, fig. 11, 22.

1430 *Ibid.*, 192; Guenon, *Le Roi du Monde*, 92, note 4.

1431 Piankoff, *Wandering of the Soul*, 14.

1432 *Ibid.*, 28.

1433 *Pyramid Text* 124.

Phoenician terra-cotta model of a galley from Amathus reveals the central Eye upon its prow.1434 The Eye occurs also on Chinese boats.1435

The Vase-Ship

Reflecting the identity of the ship and receptacle is the English word *vessel*, meaning both "container" and "ship." The German *Schiff* means, at once, "ship" and "water container," and the roots of the German *Kanne*, "pot," and *Kahn*, "boat," are identical.1436

In Egyptian symbolism, Piankoff tells us, "The jar is the cradle and at the same time a vessel for crossing the celestial waters."1437 The receptacles in which Hindu priests offered fruits and flowers to the gods were called *arghas*. But the Argha was the ship on the cosmic sea.1438

The Shield-Ship

Norse mythology knows the "shield-god" Ull, the son of Thor's wife Sif by an unknown father. "The shield, according to the skalds, was 'the ship of Ull,' that on which he traveled—a reference to a lost mythology . . ." writes MacCulloch.1439 Similarly, King Arthur's magic shield Prydwen served as the hero's ship.1440

The Throne-Ship

In the *Pyramid Texts* the king ascends to the "throne which is in your bark, O Re."1441 And the *Book of the Dead* locates the throne in the same ship: "I shall advance to my throne which is in the boat of Re. I shall not be molested, and I shall not suffer shipwreck from my throne which is in the boat of Re, the mighty one."1442

The Serpent (Dragon)-Ship

G.E. Smith writes: "The custom of employing the name 'dragon' in reference to a boat is found in places as far apart as Scandinavia and China . . . In India the Makara, the prototype of the dragon, was sometimes represented as a boat which was looked upon as a fish-avatar of Vishnu, Buddha or some other deity."1443

Numerous Egyptian sources identify the ship with the cosmic serpent—who is also the "pathway" traversed by the boat. The *Book of the Dead*, for example, describes the ship sailing over the "back" of the serpent-dragon Apepi.1444 A dragon-like creature often serves as a ship in Mesopotamian cylinder seals, just as the serpentine Chronos forms the path of the ship of Helios

One could, of course, endlessly expand the list of such connections between the enclosure and the ship. One might even say that the ship has no independent existence apart from the enclosure.

1434 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 820.

1435 *Ibid.*

1436 Neumann, *op. cit.*, 256.

1437 Piankoff, *Litany of Re*, 64; *Pyramid Texts* 437, 1185.

1438 *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. III, 134.

1439 MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, 157.

1440 Faber, *Origins*, Vol. III, 91-92, 177.

1441 *Pyramid Text* 336.

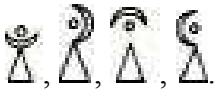
1442 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 230.

1443 *Op. cit.*, 117, note 1.

1444 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 297.

Nor can one ignore the widespread connection of the great god's ship with the cosmic mountain. In accord with the archaic forms and , *the ship rests on the mountaintop, providing the Mount with its cleft summit.* From Egypt to Mesopotamia to Scandinavia one finds the images of the ship brought into connection with the pillared crescent . Fig. 101f, from southwest Norway can be compared to a prehistoric drawing from Egypt (fig. 102f). In the latter instance the pillared crescent is shown twice, while one end of the ship terminates in a crescent-enclosure .

For a more formal version of the ship and Mount I offer details from two illustration in the *Book of the Dead* (fig. 97). In both drawings the ship, in the form of a double serpent, rests upon the Primeval Hill. While one shows the throne within the ship, the other shows the steps of the Primeval Hill: "I have reached the high portals of the Entourage of Re, who reckon up the *pillared* bark," announces the king in a *Coffin Text.*[1445]

The subject is a *revolving* ship, traversing a circle around the summit of the cosmic mountain,  . That is, the Mount serves as the axis of the ship's revolution: "I assume my pure seat which is in the bow of the Bark of Re. It is the sailors who row Re, and it is the sailors who convey Re round about the Mount of Glory, and it is they who will convey me round about the Mount of Glory."[1446] "Hail, Only One! behold thou art in the Sektet boat as it goeth round about the Mount of Glory."[1447]

When the texts describe the god "sailing over the supports of Shu,"[1448] or engaged in his "voyage over the Leg of Ptah,"[1449] they do not depart from the integrated symbolism of the world pillar, for the supports of Shu ( ) and the leg of Ptah refer to one and the same cosmic column.

It is surely significant that in both Egypt and Mesopotamia the cosmic pillar appears as the "mooring post" of the great god's ship. What the Sumerians called *dimgal* (Babylonian tarkullu) and the Egyptians *mena* or *menat* may be translated either as the "Binding Post" or "Mooring Post." The Egyptian image of the *menat* is , depicting the enclosed sun-cross atop the cosmic pillar; but *menat* is a common term for the post to which the ship of heaven is tied or moored, and the verb *mena* means "to tie the boat to the post."

One can also understand the axis-pillar as the ship's *mast.* We earlier noted that the great father, considered as an extension of the Mount, becomes the central (third) peak rising between the two peaks of the right and left. When one views the crescent (two peaks) as the ship of heaven the equivalence of the Mount and the ship's "mast" becomes self-evident. The general tradition is observed by Faber: "A vast centrical mountain formed the mast or boss of the mundane boat: and the great father, rising out of the sacred umbilicus of the arkite

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1445 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 186. [Emphasis added.] The close connection of the ship and the Mount of Glory is apparent in another hymn from the same texts: "The Great Ones who are in the Mount of Glory appear, the Followers of the Lords of all rejoice, the crews and servants of the bark are glad, and those who are in the Mount of Glory are happy when they see you in this dignity of yours." *Ibid.*, 39.

1446 *Pyramid Text* 710-11.

1447 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 478.

1448 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 261.

1449 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 166. A widespread association of the ship and the axis-pillar is noted by Cirlot: " . . . Many primitive peoples place ships on the end of a pole or on the roof of a house . . . all these forms, then, represent the axis valley-mountain, or the symbolism of verticality and the idea of height. An obvious association here is with all the symbols of the world-axis." *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 295.

world, supplied to it the place of a mast. That mountain was the hill of paradise."[1450] The Hindu symbol of the ship on the mountaintop, according to Faber, is the trident of Shiva, composed of a rod or staff surmounted by a "lunette" ◡ with a spike rising in its centre. The trident, he states, denotes "the ship Argha under its sidereal form of a crescent with Shiva standing in the midst of it and supplying the place of a mast."[1451]

This identity of the ship's mast and the axis-pillar is also noted by Coomaraswamy, who relates an introductory verse of the *Dasakumaccrita*, listing "the mast of the ship of the earth" as an aspect of "the axis of the universe." In the construction of Hindu stupas the universe axis was represented by a central finial often extending upward to an impressive height. The column bore the title "sky-scraping" *yasti*, or "mast."[1452]

It is noteworthy also that the Sumerian *dimgal*, the "mooring post" or "binding post," often receives the translation "ship's mast."[1453] In our world a mast and a mooring post are wholly distinct, but in the symbolism of the cosmic ship and mountain they are strictly synonymous, as we should expect.

By understanding the ship's mast as an extension of the cosmic mountain one perceives a deeper meaning in the steps which rise in the centre of the Egyptian boat illustrated below (fig. 97). The steps, as the most common Egyptian symbol of the Primeval Hill, here replace the ship's mast. And it is no accident, for while the Egyptian *khet* means "steps" (Primeval Hill), *khet* also means "ship's mast" (*Primeval Hill=steps=mast=Primeval Hill*). The symbolism becomes all the more fascinating when one discovers that the Hindus identified the steps or pyramid as both the polar Mount Meru and the mast of the ship Argha.

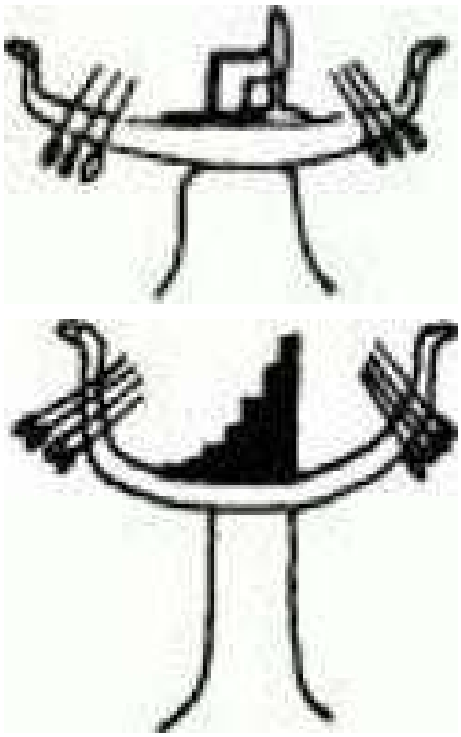

Figure 97. Two Egyptian versions of the cosmic ship and Primeval Hill.

Such integrated symbolism underlines the fundamental relation of the crescent-ship to the cosmic mountain. Faber thus concludes: "Here we may perceive the reason why the pagans deemed those mountains peculiarly

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1450 *Origins*, Vol. II, 20.

1451 *Ibid*., 382.

1452 Coomaraswamy, "Symbolism of the Dome," 18. The mast of the cosmic ship of Life coincides "with the vertical axis of the house and the axle-tree of the chariot," writes Coomaraswamy. *Ibid.*, 11.

1453 Sjöberg and Bergmann, *The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns*, 21, 67, 151.

sacred, which branched out at their summits into either two or three smaller peaks or tumuli. They considered them, in the one case, as naturally shadowing out the holy hill with the navicular Moon resting on its top, and in the other case, as still being a physical copy of the same holy hill surmounted by the Moon, but the Moon now rendered complete by the addition of the centrical mast or pilot . . . "[1454]

It follows from this line of evidence that the Egyptian mountain signs and —offering a natural representation of the two- or three-peaked summit—must have possessed the same import as the ship of heaven; both the ship and the cleft summit had their reference in the crescent, visually united to the celestial column so as to form the image . The ship on the mountaintop merges with the two peaks of the right and left. Consistent with this overlapping imagery are those prehistoric Egyptian vase paintings depicting the cosmic ship bearing the mountain sign .[1455]

It is, of course, the universal opinion of Egyptologists that the mountain glyph represents two geographical peaks real or imaginary, from which the solar orb rises each morning.

But if the analysis set forth here is correct, *the twin peaks of the Mount, being synonymous with the ship of heaven, must have revolved daily around the sun-god's enclosure—in flagrant contradiction of natural geography!*

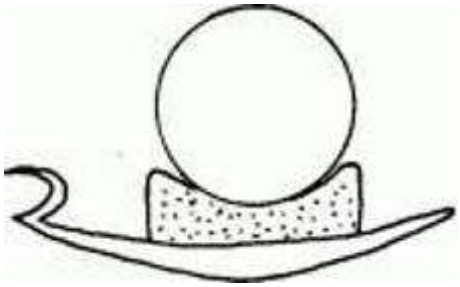

Figure 98. The twin-peaked Khut , depicted as an inseparable part of the cosmic ship.

Could the Egyptians have believed that the cleft summit sailed with, or as, the cosmic ship? Actually, it was not uncommon for the Egyptian artists to place the Khut (Mount of Glory) within the revolving ship, proclaiming the essential identity of the two images (fig. 98). Of this identity Clark provides two examples. In each case the Aten rests between the peaks of the right and left, which in turn sit squarely in the cosmic ship.

Responding to the first instance, Clark calls the cleft hill the "eastern horizon," adding that "this hill is *incongruously placed in the solar boat.*"[1456] In the second illustration the Aten "rests on the twin-peaked mountain of sunrise. *Against all verisimilitude* this figure, mountain and all, is being conveyed across the waters of the heavenly ocean in a boat."[1457] As bizarre as this sailing mountaintop may appear to conventional mythologists, it is, to us, one of several independent proofs that the mountain sign means simply the revolving Saturnian crescent, here rendered naturalistically in its mythical form as two peaks. When the texts say that the god "sails round about in the Khut ," they mean literally that *he sails within the cleft peak as in a ship.* Of course, to reckon with these concepts one must abandon once and for all the standard translation of Khut as "horizon." The twin peaks are anything but a fixture of the local landscape. (Though the most common position of the mountain image is upright, some illustrations depict it in an *inverted* position ,

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1454 *Origins*, Vol. III, 205.

1455 Newberry, "The Petty-Kingdom of the Harpoon and Egypt's Earliest Mediterranean Port," 18n.

1456 *Op. cit.*, 252. [Emphasis added.]

1457 *Ibid.*, 251. [Emphasis added.]

again contradicting geography.) Moreover, the distinction between the upright and inverted positions of the revolving twin peaks is crucial to the symbolism of the archaic "day" and "night," as I shall show.

Equally important is the relation of the ship to the cosmic twins. The image tells us that the ship itself divides the enclosure into two portions of light and shadow. Accordingly, though the Egyptian word *At* denotes the boat of heaven, the same word means "to divide, bisect." The language conforms precisely to the cosmology of the crescent-enclosure, half dark, half light.

But the Egyptians also identified the ship with the twins Isis-Nephthys, the "two eyes" (the left and right positions of the revolving crescent).1458 "Thy right eye is in the Sektet boat, and thy left eye is in the Atet boat," declares the *Book of the Dead.*1459 In the ritual for the deceased, a chapter of the *Book of the Dead* is to be "said over a Bark of Re coloured in pure green. And thou shall place a picture of the deceased at the prow thereof. And make a Sektet boat on the right side of it and an Atet boat on the left side of it."1460 Together, the boats of the left and right compose the protective enclosure or bond, represented by the *shen* sign .

In its every feature, then, the great god's ship conforms to the revolving Saturnian crescent—enclosing the central sun, resting upon the cosmic mountain, and dividing the circumpolar enclosure into divisions of light and shadow.

The Crescent-Arms

To terrestrial observers gazing up the axis-pillar, the Saturnian crescent appeared as two outstretched arms reaching around and holding aloft the crescent-enclosure .

No one considering the image of the sun-in-crescent resting atop the cosmic pillar will have any difficulty understanding why the crescent came to be viewed as the outstretched arms of the great mother, or of the heaven-sustaining god.

Of course, it is only in combination with the central sun and pillar that the crescent could acquire this significance. Nothing in our crescent moon, for example, could possibly suggest the upraised arms of a human-like figure. In ancient art, however, the crescent is often located behind the shoulders of a divinity (as suggested by the form) and in certain cases *replaces the arms.* (In fig. 99 I offer several examples from the Americas.)

In fig. 100 the Hindu twins Jagan-Nath and Bal-Rama, bearing the respective black and white countenances of Shiva and Vishnu (with whom they are identified), stand to the right and left of the goddess Subhadra, a form of Devi. The "body" of each of the three deities appears to be composed of two eggs ([twofold] egg="body"); upon the bodies of Jagan-Nath and Bal-Rama rests a crescent-like form and in each crescent appears the head of the deity. Commenting on this image, Faber writes: "The crescent itself exhibits the rude semblance of arms, as the twofold egg does that of a body: but a sort of standard attached to the frame on which the three divinities are seated, sufficiently shows that *the apparent arms are really a lunette*, for the standard displays in a black background the mystic crescent with a circular ball within it representing the head of the deity."1461

1458 *Pyramid Texts* 1981-82.

1459 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 507.

1460 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 259.

1461 *Origins*, Vol II; see plate I, fig. 16. [Emphasis added.]

Figure 99. (a) Columbian pictograph;

Figure 99. (b) Columbian pictograph;

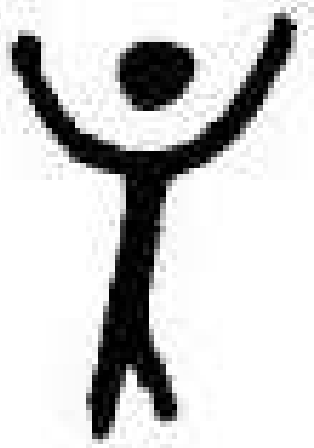


Figure 99. (c) Bolivian pictograph;

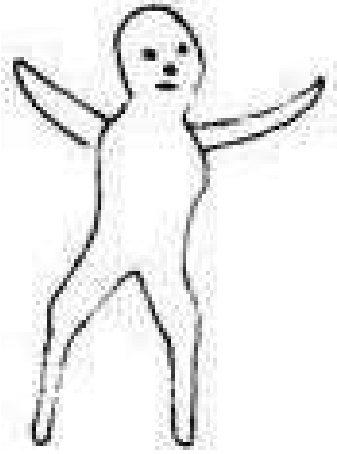


Figure 99. (d) Brazilian pictograph;

Figure 99. (e) Arapahp sign for “person”;

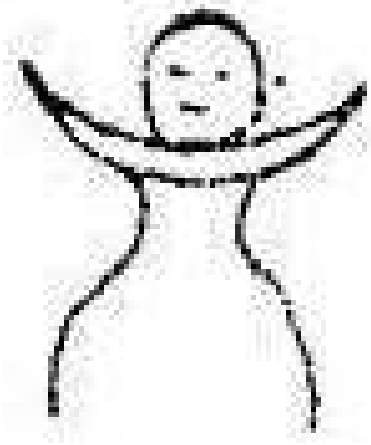


Figure 99. (f) North American goddess.

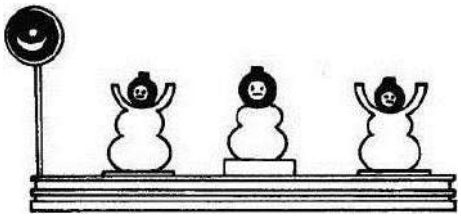


Figure 100. Hindu twins, Jagan-Nath and Bal-Rama, with semicircular arms, stand to the right and left of the goddess Subhadra.

A more pure form of the crescent- or horned-arms occurs in Scandinavian rock drawings, repeatedly exhibiting the image along with numerous variations which present the semi-circular shape alternately as horns or as outstretched arms of more human-like forms (fig. 101). This mixture of images, in fact, leaves the archaeologists undecided as to whether, in the simple form , it is arms, or horns, that are horn-like arms, or arms extended upward *to form a crescent.* In other instances, the human figure does not stand in the boat, but holds the boat aloft on upraised arms (figs. 101a, 101b). Moreover, in some cases the ship rests on the human shoulders in such a way as to *replace the arms* (figs. 101c, 101d).

Figure 101. (a)

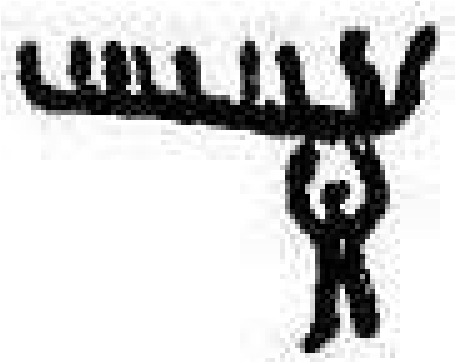


Figure 101. (b)

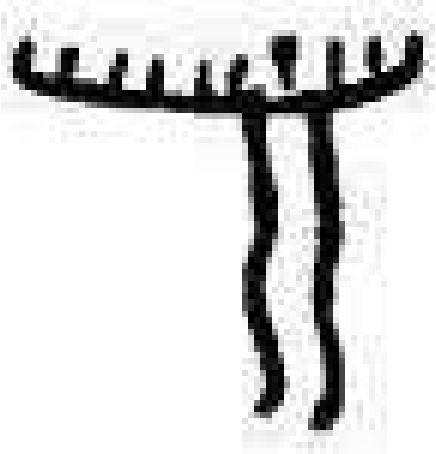


Figure 101. (c)

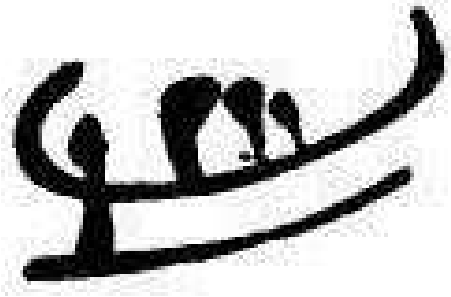


Figure 101. (d) In numerous Scandinavian rock drawings the cosmic ship either rests on the upraised arms of a Heaven Man or actually *forms* the god's arms (a, b, c & d);

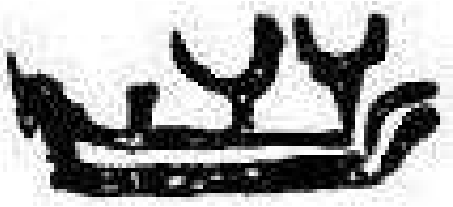


Figure 101. (e)

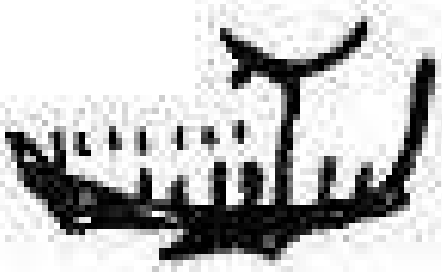
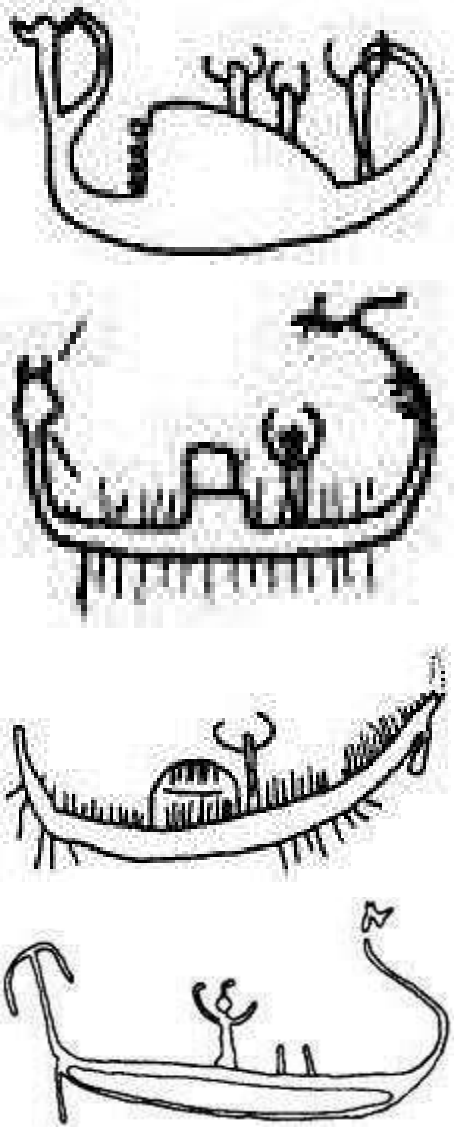


Figure 101. (f) In other drawings from the same religion a pillared crescent stands in the ship. (e & f)



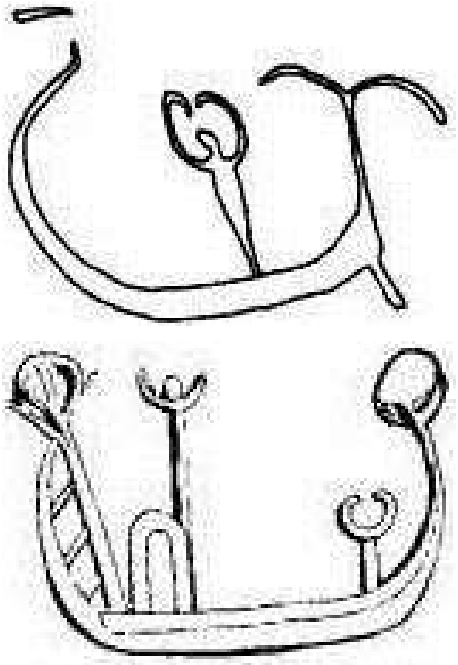


Figure 102. Prehistoric Egyptian images of the cosmic ship alternately show the Heaven Man (with upraised arms) or the pillared crescent standing in the ship.

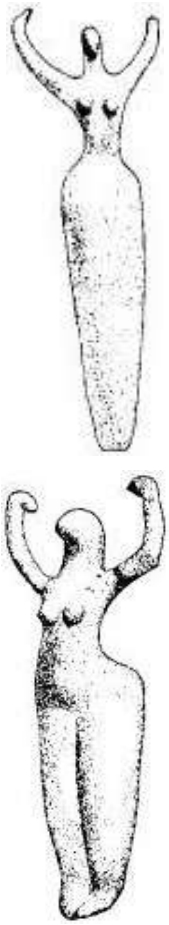


Figure 103. Predynastic Egyptian figurines.

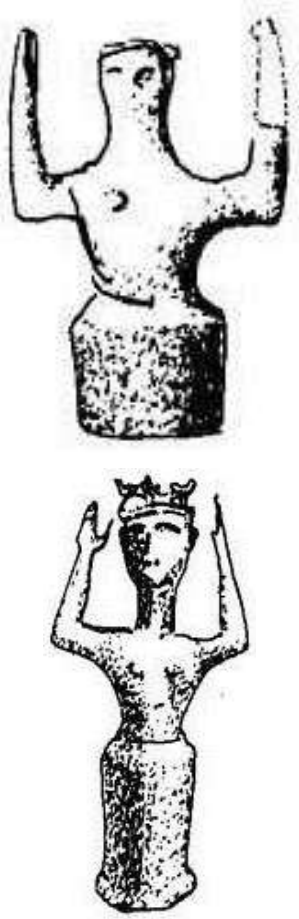
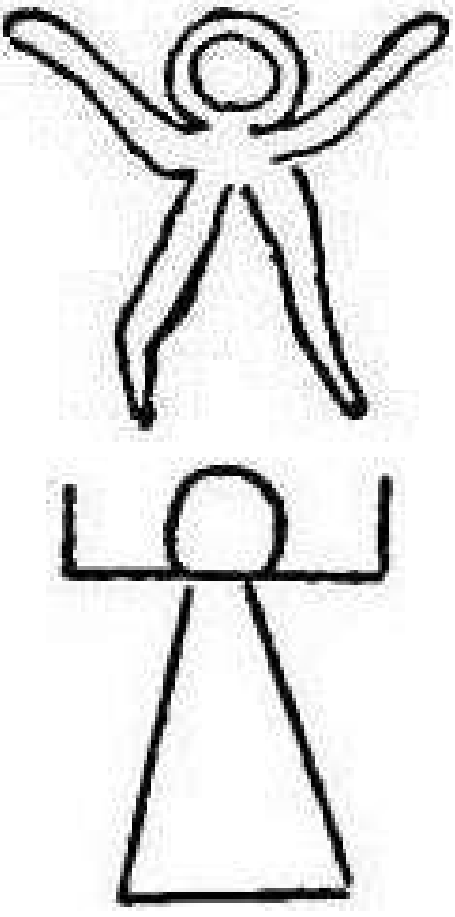


Figure 104. Cretan mother goddess.



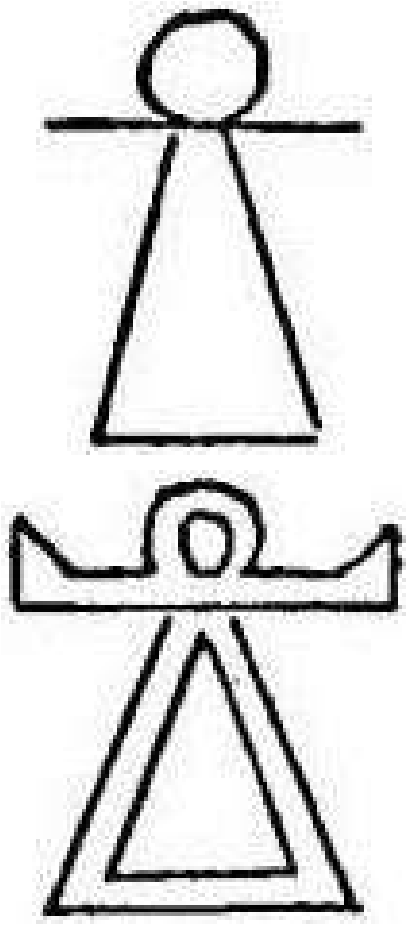


Figure 105. Symbols of the Phoenician goddess Tanit.

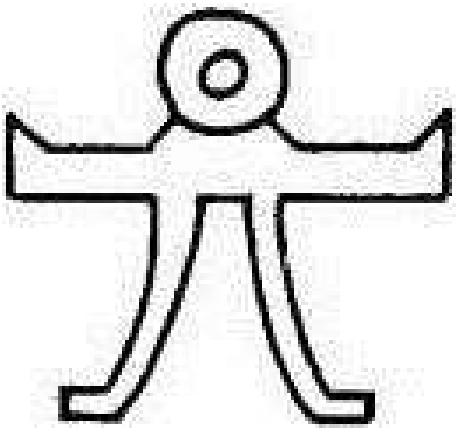


Figure 106. Hittite image.

The cosmic divinity with upraised arms will be found in all quarters of the world (figs. 103, 104, 105 & 106). Most crucial are the associations of such figures with the axis-pillar and enclosure. The mythical Afrite of Arabian myth was an apostate angel, "tall and black" (Saturn="black" planet), whose trunk formed a vast pillar, his arms stretching heavenward.

Compare the description of the Hindu Manu, the "glorious sage" and first king: "With *arms uplifted* and *poised on one leg*, he, the king of men, practiced hard austerities in the *Badari* forest, named Vishala. And there he did arduous penance for ten thousand years with his head downwards and his eyes unwinking."1462

1462 Suryakants, *The Flood Legend in Sanskrit Literature*, 4. [Emphasis added.]

Of the Iranian Mithra, the *Zend Avesta* declares: "With his arms lifted up towards Immortality, Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, drives forward . . . in a beautiful chariot [the world wheel] that drives on, ever-swift, adorned with all sorts of ornaments, and made of gold."

I pose the question: are the upraised arms an accidental convention, or an integral component of the Saturnian image ? A conclusive answer is provided by Egyptian sources.

The Ka-Arms

One of the most familiar Egyptian terms is *ka*, the symbol for which is two upraised arms . Though the word *ka* occurs with great frequency in the hieroglyphic texts, few writers can agree on a tangible meaning. Budge confesses the general lack of agreement on the subject: "The exact meaning of this word [*ka*] is unknown, but it has been translated by double, image, genius, subconscious self, natural disposition, abstract personality, character, mind, etc.; all these meanings are suggested by their contexts, but the real meaning of the word has yet to be discovered."1463

"The closest approximation to the Egyptian notion of Ka is 'vital force,'" writes Frankfort. "The qualification 'vital' frees it from the precision of the natural sciences, which would, of course, be an anachronism: and the combination 'vital force' may stand for a somewhat vague popular notion without mechanistic implications. The Ka, according to this view, should be impersonal and should be present in varying strength in different persons or in the same person at different times."1464

In none of the common interpretations is the Ka regarded as a *visible* power. Instead, the experts tend to treat the Ka as a hidden source of life. Clark tells us that "the Ka is a symbol of the transmission of life power from the gods to man. But it is not only the act, it is also the source of this power. Everyone is a receiver of divine power and everyone is an individual, so each has his own Ka."1465

I am not prepared to argue that these modern-sounding definitions are wholly wrong—only that they focus on derived, rather than concrete meanings. *In its original sense the Ka is exactly what its glyph indicates—two upraised arms*— ! The ancients *saw* the two arms of the Ka, and every aspect of the symbolism springs from a once visible relationship of these arms to the great god and his dwelling.

In recording the Saturnian configuration nothing could have been more natural than the interpretation of the crescent as two arms, straining upward. To present the "arms" in human form, is, of course, the only possible way to express pictorially this mythical interpretation of the crescent (just as the only way to depict the crescent's mythical form as horns was *to draw it as horns* or to place the crescent-enclosure on the head of a Bull).

To test the proposed connection of the Ka-arms with the Saturnian image , several questions require investigation:

Do Egyptian sources locate the central sun within the Ka-arms? Are the cosmic ship and horns identified with these outstretched arms? Do the Ka-arms reach around the enclosure? Do the arms constitute the cleft summit of the world mountain? Is the Ka one half of a twin circle?

1463 Quoted in Perry, *op. cit.*, 138.

1464 *From Fetish to God*, 328.

1465 *Op. cit.*, 62.

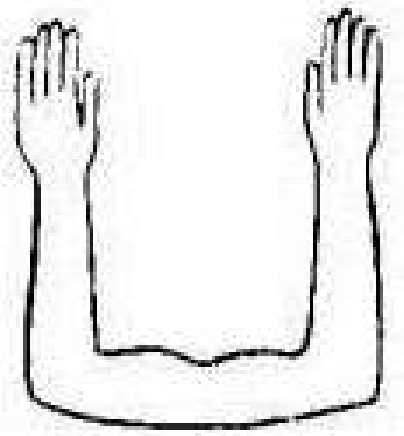


Figure 107. (a) The Ka;

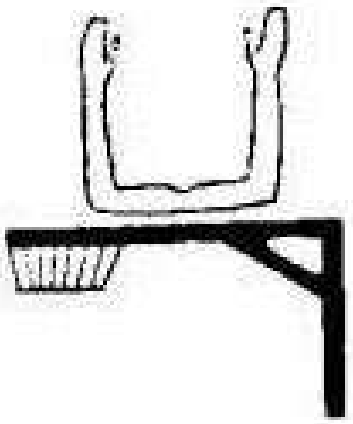


Figure 107. (b) The Ka resting on the primordial “perch”;

Figure 107. (c) The Ka embracing the royal “name.”

Figure 108. The arms of the Abyss supporting the Aten.

On each of these questions, Egyptian sources yield a clear-cut reply.

1. While most analyses discuss the Ka as a (hidden) dimension of the human personality, Egyptian sources consistently locate the Ka not in this world, but among the gods. The point is noticed by Breasted: ". . . The ka was not an element of the personality, as is so often stated. It seems to me indeed from a study of the *Pyramid Texts*, that the nature of the ka has been fundamentally misunderstood . . . It was in the world of the *hereafter* that he [the Ka] chiefly if not exclusively had his abode . . ."1466

When the king dies "he goes to his Ka in the sky,"1467 and here, in heaven, the Ka protects him from the destructive demons of Chaos.1468 But why is this protective genius portrayed as two outstretched arms ? The reason is that the heaven attained by the deceased king is the dwelling of the central sun, who resides within the embrace of two shining arms raised aloft in the Abyss. "This god is like this," states one mythological text: "Two arms guard the body of this god."1469 Another invokes Atum shining forth from "the arms of Aker."1470 The great god Re "is like this on the arms of the Mysterious One."1471 "The Aten is in the Tuat. The arms of the Mysterious Face come out and lift it up,"1472 reads another text.

Thus Osiris "rests" within the two arms of the Ka: "Hail, O Osiris, thy ka hath come unto thee and . . . thou resteth therein in thy name of Ka-Hetep."1473 "Thy father Tatunen lifteth thee up and he stretcheth out his two hands behind thee."1474

1466 *Op. cit.*, 231.

1467 *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, 52.

1468 *Ibid.*, 53; *Pyramid Text* 1431.

1469 Thus the dead king Pepi "lives with his ka; he [the *ka*] expels the evil that is before Pepi, he removes the evil that is behind Pepi, like the boomerangs of the lord of Letoplis [the cosmic city], which remove the evil that is before him and expel the evil that is behind him." *Pyramid Text* 908, translated in Breasted, *op. cit.*, 53.

1470 Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri*, 212.

1471 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 71.

1472 *Ibid.*, 94.

1473 *Ibid.*, 376.

1474 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 388.

In truth, the saying "to go to his ka" means to attain heaven and thus to reside in the protective embrace of the heaven-sustaining god .

O Re-Atum, your son comes to you, the King comes to you; raise him up, enclose him in your embrace . . .[1475]

It is pleasant for me . . . within the arms of my father, within the arms of Atum.[1476]

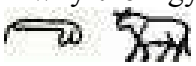
O Atum, set your arms about the King . . . O Atum, set your protection over this King . . .[1477]

Go up on high, and it will be well with you, it will be pleasant for you in the embrace of your father, in the embrace of Atum.[1478]

To represent the union of the king with the outstretched arms of heaven the Egyptians depicted the Ka enclosing the cartouche or royal name of the Horus-king (fig. 107c). In the hieroglyphs the Ka-arms signify "to embrace" and "to protect." "The royal Ka put his arms around the Horus name to protect it from harm," notes Clark.[1479] There is no need to seek out hidden metaphysical implications in this symbolism, for the Ka was in every way an emblem of the *visible* enclosure, the *protective* rampart in heaven.

2. That the Ka-arms pertain to the "embracing" crescent will explain why the sun-god *sails* on the two arms; the same text which describes Re "like this on the arms of the Mysterious One," declares, "This Great God sails over this cavern [the hollow of the Tuat] *on the arms* of the Mysterious One."[1480]

A spell from the *Coffin Texts* has the king appearing "in the bark of the morning . . . in the arms of Anup."[1481] And Osiris sails "on the two arms of Horus in his [Horus'] name of 'Henu-bark.'"[1482] This equation of the ship and the outstretched arms finds repeated illustration in the cosmic scenes depicted on coffins and papyri.

It follows from this identity, of course, that the arms of the Ka are synonymous with the luminous horns of the celestial bull. And here lies the simple explanation why the Egyptian word for "bull" is also *ka*, written with the same arms , to which the determinatives  are added. (The subject is the generative Bull of Heaven.)[1483]

I know the secret of Hieraconopolis.

It is the two hands of horns *and what is in them.*[1484]

The embracing hands or arms mean the same thing as the horns.

1475 *Ibid.*, 86.

1476 *Pyramid Text* 160.

1477 *Pyramid Text* 151.

1478 *Pyramid Texts* 1653-54.

1479 *Pyramid Text* 212.

1480 *Op. cit.*, 232. [Emphasis added.]

1481 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 93.

1482 Lacau, *op. cit.*, 31.

1483 Hassan, *op. cit.*, 12.

1484 Newberry, "Two Cults of the Old Kingdom," 28. [Emphasis added.]

3. If the outstretched arms, as suggested by the configuration , reach around the circumpolar enclosure, then "to go to his Ka" must signify the king's rebirth in the primeval womb. Did the Egyptians identify the Ka-arms with the mother goddess?

"When the dead king was placed in his coffin," writes Piankoff, "he was placed *between the arms of his mother Nut.*"1485 The king's return to the mother womb is expressed in the *Pyramid Texts*:

Thou art given to thy mother Nut, in her name coffin;

*She embraces thee, in her name sarcophagus.*1486

Nut, the "coffin," means Nut, the womb of primeval birth (or rebirth). And to dwell in the womb is to reside within the *embracing* arms of the goddess. Thus, the very goddess in whose *womb* shines the central sun is also described enclosing and protecting the sun, or king, with *outstretched arms*.

*I am thy mother Nut. My arms encircle thee in life and health.*1487

*The arms of Nut who bore you are about you so that your beauty may be upraised.*1488

Words spoken by Isis the Divine:

*I have come, I encircle my son with my arms . . . I shall be his protection eternally.*1489

*. . . The goddess Maat embraceth thee.*1490

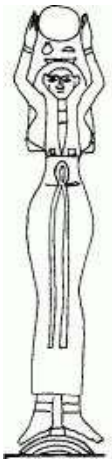


Figure 109. Nut embracing the Aten with outstretched arms.

In apparent defiance of nature, the texts proclaim that the Ka-arms *give birth* to the sun-god. The *Pyramid Texts* extol "the Great One who came into being in the arms of Her who bore the god."1491 In the *Instruction of Ptahhotep* appears the statement, "He is thy son, whom thy Ka hath begotten for thee."1492 And elsewhere

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1485 Piankoff, *The Pyramid Text of Unas*, 43. [Emphasis added.]

1486 *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 21.

1487 *Ibid.*, 21, quoting *Pyramid Text* 616.

1488 *Ibid.*, 114.

1489 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 54.

1490 *Ibid.*, 83.

1491 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 4.

1492 *Pyramid Text* 258.

we read: "Thy mother bringeth thee forth upon her hands, that thou mayest give light to the whole circumference which the Aten enlighteneth."[1493]

In the tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amon appear four gold coffins containing the extracted viscera, each coffin being represented by a goddess, and symbolically enclosing one of the Four Sons of Horus. The inscriptions upon the lids of the coffins leave no doubt as to the identity of the enclosing arms and the protective womb:

Words spoken by Isis: I close my arms over that which is in me. I protect Imesty who is in me, Imesty, Osiris King Neb-Kheperu-Re, justified before the Great God.

Words spoken by Nephthys: I embrace with my arms that which is in me, I protect Hapy of Osiris King Neb-Kheperu-Re, justified before the Great God.

Words spoken by Neith: I encircle with my arms that which is in me, I protect Dua-mutef who is in me, Dua-mutef, Osiris King Neb-Kheperu-Re, justified before the Great God.

Words spoken by Selkit: My two arms are on what is in me. I protect Keb-senuf who is in me, Keb-senuf, Osiris King Neb-Kheperu-Re, the justified one.[1494]

The inscriptions explicitly declare that the arms of the goddess enclose the god-king within the womb. That the goddess (womb) *is* the arms, and that these arms are those of the Ka, is confirmed by a design in the funerary temple of King Seti I (fig. 110). The design shows a female figure embracing the king. *On the head of the goddess stands the two arms of the Ka within which is written the goddess' name.*[1495]

In depicting the Ka, Egyptian artists were obviously constrained by the awkwardness which would result from the human-like representation of the image as a man-child within the arms of a god or goddess. In our world one does not embrace a child with *uplifted arms*. To accommodate the primal image to a natural anthropomorphic mode of representation, the artists showed the arms twice—first, as the arms of the human, or personified Ka, embracing and protecting the man-child; and second, as upraised arms placed upon the head of the Ka-divinity. It is the latter representation which expresses the cosmic form of the protective embrace.

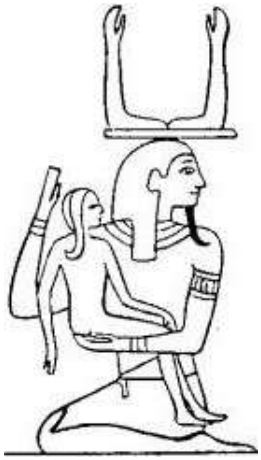

Figure 110. The divinized Ka embraces the man-child.

1493 Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, 59.

1494 Renouf, *op. cit.*, 24.

1495 Piankoff, *op. cit.*, *The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 19.

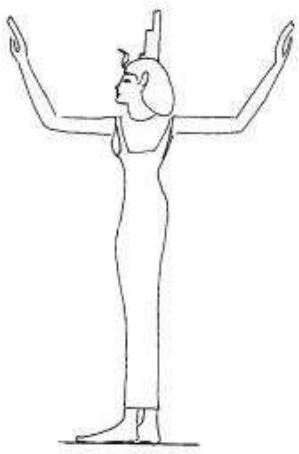

Figure 111. The Egyptian goddess Isis, whose upraised arms enclosed the central sun.

Hence, the goddess Isis, often depicted enclosing her son Horus upon her lap (womb), is also shown standing erect with arms held aloft (fig. 111). Since the uplifted arms, by Egyptian symbolism, mean "protect" and "embrace," one can be certain that the raised arms of Isis pertain directly to Isis' role as the "protectress" of the sun-god. Cosmic symbolism was not determined by what is "natural" in the human world so much as by the literal form of the Saturn apparition .

The outstretched arms of the Egyptian great god or goddess hold aloft and encircle the celestial earth.

*O King, you have enclosed every god within your arms, their lands and all their possessions. O King, you are great and round as the circle which surrounds the Hau-nebut.*1496

*The earth is raised on high under the sky by your arms, O Tefenet.*1497

An identical picture occurs in the Iranian *Zend Avesta*, where Mithra, "with arms lifted up towards immortality," encloses "the boundary of the earth."

*And do thou, O Mithra! encompassing all this around, do thou reach it, all over, with thy arms.*1498

Pointing to the same relation is the common Egyptian phrase "house of the Ka."1499 To dwell in the cosmic temple is to rest within the arms, and the texts thus speak of "the two arms of the temple."1500

4. Among the Egyptian gods none is more often depicted with upraised arms than the pillar-god Shu, between whose arms rests the primeval sun Atum, or Re. Egyptian reliefs regularly portray Shu standing erect and sustaining the body (womb) of the goddess Nut with his arms held in virtually the same position as those of the Ka-symbol . *The arms which enclose the sun-god belong to the cosmic mountain.* Thus we read: "The mountain will hold out its arms to him and the living Ka's will accompany him."1501

The hieroglyphic symbol of the Shu-pillar or mountain is —called "the two pillars of heaven." The two pillars, in other words, are really one pillar, with two arms. Hence Re, who shines between the mountain peaks

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1496 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 67.

1497 *Pyramid Text* 847.

1498 Darmesteter, *op. cit.*, Part II, 146; Perry, *op. cit.*, 138-39.

1499 *Pyramid Text* 1405.

1500 Énel, *Les Origines de la Genèse et l'Enseignement des Temples de l'Ancienne Égypte*, 211.

1501 Piankofff, *The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 125.

of the right and left, also rests atop the forked pillar of Shu, whose two secondary supports are the embracing arms of the Ka. "Thou seest Re upon the pillars which are the arms of heaven," reads the *Book of the Dead.*1502

In the *Papyrus of Mut-hetep* the embracing arms are those of Tatunen, the acknowledged personification of the Primeval Hill. "Thy father Tatunen, placing his hands behind thee, raiseth thee up."1503 What are these two arms of the Primeval Hill other than the two peaks of the right and left?

Most relevant in this connection is the hieroglyphic symbol for "living Re"— . The image not only shows the sun-god resting within the upraised Ka-arms, but presents the arms as an extension of the heavens pillar, so that the entire configuration suggests a human form virtually identical to that of Shu in the above-mentioned illustrations. The same image in yet more human form is offered by the hieroglyph , symbol of the elevated god and the cosmic summit. And in the glyph the Egyptians depicted the personified pillar holding aloft the symbol of heaven . What is clear from a survey of the related texts and symbols is that the Egyptians conceived the arms of the Mount or god in visible terms. When the king, in a *Pyramid Text*, beseeches the god, "O Shu, may your two arms be behind Teti," one witnesses the influence of things seen, not abstract speculation.

In the signs , , and , we have three closely related ways of representing the prototypal form , and it is this prototype which enables one to see why the Egyptians celebrated the Ka-arms as the *two peaks* of the Mount of Glory. The Ka-sign and the mountain sign gave pictorial expression to two equally compelling interpretations of the pillared crescent. Once one perceives this underlying identity of the arms and the twofold peak, it is impossible not to notice that the Egyptians themselves remembered the connection through many centuries (even if they did not understand it perfectly). Repeatedly the artists showed two arms extended upward from the cleft peak (fig. 112). As is usually the case with the most significant symbolic relationships, the union of the arms and two peaks is set forth *in spite of* its seeming mockery of the natural order.

Figure 112. Kheprer, residing in the Aten, appears between the two arms, which correspond to the two peaks of the Khut.

1502 Clark, *op. cit.*, 233.

1503 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 587.

The equivalence of the Ka-arms and two peaks is confirmed by other symbols also. One of the Egyptian names of the twofold Mount of Glory was Aker, drawn as a twin-headed lion .1504 Just as the Aten rests on the two peaks of the Khut , so also does it lie on the "back of Aker." In one text the sun-god Re commands Aker, "O, give me your arms, receive me . . . I give light for you, I dispel your darkness."1505 The arms of Aker can be nothing other than the two peaks from which the sun-god shines forth each day, for the *Book of Caverns* says that the "One of the Tuat goes forth [shines] from the arms of Aker."1506 The same source also invokes:

*Duati, the Infernal One, who comes out of the arms of Aker.*1507

*Atum, who comes out of the arms of Aker. Ifeny, who comes out of the arms of Aker.*1508

Though the terminology will offend the modern ear, it is perfectly consistent with the cosmic image to speak of the "two arms of the mountain," and this is exactly what the Egyptians meant by the phrase "the arms of Aker."

5. It remains to be asked, then, what was the relationship of the crescent-arms to the cosmic twins. Certainly one cannot ignore the fact that the Egyptian *ka* is often translated "double" or "twin." "The ka of the king is his twin; it accompanies him through life as a protective genius, it acts as his twin and his protector in death."1509

The imagery of the king has its origin in the image of the Universal Monarch. If the arms depicted by the Ka sign refer to the Saturnian crescent, reaching halfway around the circumpolar enclosure, this in itself is sufficient to explain the Ka's designation as the "twin." In the configuration the twin (or half the enclosure) *is* the two arms.

In accord with the counterpoised positions of the revolving crescent (and , or and), Egyptian representations of the arms show alternating relationships to the central sun. While the upright position of the arms is very common in Egyptian art, one finds innumerable instances in which the arms embrace the Aten either from the right or left, or from above. Of the latter instance I give three examples (figs. 81, 113, 114). Like so many Egyptian representations, all of these examples juxtapose different mythical versions of the crescent. In the first (fig. 81) we see the man-child sitting upon the mountain symbol and resting within the enclosure of the Aten, here presented as a circular serpent with tail in mouth. This circle, in turn, rests upon the horns of a bull whose head is placed between the twin lions Shu and Tefnut, representing the peaks of the right and left. But reaching around half of the serpentine band *from above* are two arms—clearly the same arms which elsewhere embrace the Aten from below.

1504 Budge, *From Fetish to God*, 401.

1505 The reader will have no difficulty seeing that the Aker glyph simply translates the image (here) into leonine form.

1506 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 71.

1507 *Ibid.*

1508 *Ibid.*

1509 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 69.

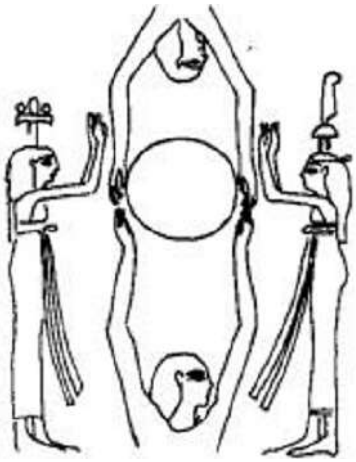

Figure 113.

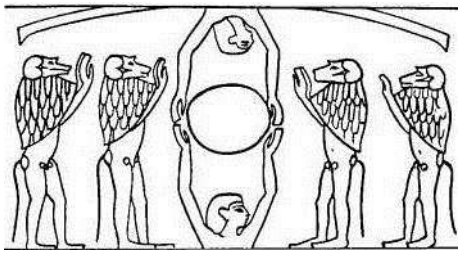

Figure 114. To depict the full cycle of the "day" Egyptian artists showed the outstretched arms embracing the Aten alternately from above and from below. (113 & 114)

It is my contention that such symbolism represents alternate phases of the archaic day, each "day" being marked by a full revolution of the crescent around the enclosure, as it passes from its position below to an inverted position above and back to below again.

As figures of the revolving crescent, the upright and inverted arms are synonymous with the cosmic twins, who personify the above and below (as well as the right and left). Just this connection of the arms with the twins is indicated in the *Papyrus* of *Pa-di-Amon* (fig. 113). The illustration shows the Aten in the centre flanked by the two goddesses. Two male figures are also present, one above and one below, each reaching around the Aten with outstretched arms, so that together the upright and inverted arms compose a complete enclosure—the circle of the cosmic twins.1510 The same relationship of the upright and inverted arms to the circle of the Aten will be seen also in the *Papyrus of Khonsu-Renep*.1511 (fig. 114)

Closely related are the symbolic representations which portray the arms alternately reaching round the Aten from the right and left. One such example occurs in the *Papyrus of Khonsu-mes A*. Here the arms are explicitly connected with the symbols of Abtet and Amentet, the two divisions of the celestial kingdom (left-right).1512

1510 Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri*, 37.

1511 *Ibid.*, 39.

1512 *Ibid.*, 38.

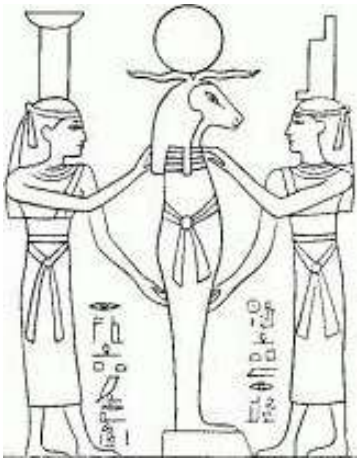

Figure 115. The twin goddesses Isis and Nephthys stand to the right and left of Osiris-Re, forming an enclosure with their arms.

Clearly, the counterpoised arms denote the cosmic twins, revolving daily round the Aten. The texts say as much when they locate the great god *within the arms (or hands) of the twins.* In a *Coffin Text* Atum recalls the beginning:

[At first] *I lived with my two children, my little ones,*

the one before me, the other behind me . . .

I rose over them, but their arms were around me.

Similarly, one finds:

The arm of Horus is about you [and] *the arm of Thoth, the two great gods have supported you.*1513

*You are raised aloft on the hands of Shu and Tefnut . . .*1514

Isis and Nephthys salute thee, they sing songs of joy at thy rising [coming forth] *in the boat, they protect thee with their hands.*1515

Together the counterpoised arms of the twins form the protective enclosure—the womb giving birth to the central sun.

*. . . The god is given birth by the sky upon the arms of Shu and Tefnut.*1516

The symbolism of the outstretched arms meets every test of the Saturnian crescent. The arms take the form of a crescent enclosing the central sun. They are inseparable from the cosmic womb; they constitute the two peaks of the world mountain; and they are identified directly with the celestial twins.

The Crescent-Wings

The same crescent which appeared to the ancients as upraised arms also received mythical interpretations as the extended wings of the great god or goddess.

Ancient Sumerian myths recall a monstrous bird called Imdugud hovering over the primeval waters, its wings outstretched. Imdugud (the Akkadian winged dragon Zu) was a form of Ningirsu or Ninurta, the planet Saturn.1517

1513 *Pyramid Text* 1570-71.

1514 *Pyramid Text* 1353.

1515 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 17.

1516 *Pyramid Text* 1443.

1517 On the connection of Imdugud with Ninurta, see Jacobsen, *Toward the Image of Tammuz*, 4.

In this primordial wind-bird or thunder-bird scholars recognize the prototype of the Teutonic Hraesvelgr, the winged god of the storm, and the Hindu eagle Garuda, whose wings were so great as to affect the cosmic revolutions. According to the Athapascans of North America a raven hovered over the waters generating claps of thunder by the movement of his wings.1518

Natives of Hawaii say that at the beginning of time, when only the ocean existed, a great white bird appeared in the highest heaven, the egg of the world resting *between its outstretched wings.*1519 Very similar is the Hebrew mythical bird Ziz, standing in mid-ocean. The Ziz was as monstrous as Leviathan, for while his ankles rested on our earth, his head reached the sky.1520

Though the relation is sometimes forgotten, the primeval winged beast originally appears either as the great god himself or as the god's vehicle. When the Orphics celebrated the "Sun that soarest aloft on golden wings," they hearkened back to an age-old tradition. Among all of the great gods of antiquity it would be difficult to find a single figure who neither possesses wings nor rides upon wings.1521

If the Hebrew Yahweh "rides upon the wings of the wind," the Hindu Vishnu is carried about on the shoulders of the eagle Garuda. The Hindu Agni, Mithra, Varuna, and Yama receive the title Suparna, meaning "strong-winged." It is said that the outstretched wings of the Suparna *embrace the Cosmos.*1522 Also presented as winged gods are the Persian Mithra and Zurvan, the Hebrew and Phoenician El, the Greek Kronos, and all of the leading deities of ancient Egypt.

Anyone willing to look beneath the surface will find that the great god's wings are much more than a contrived convenience enabling him to "fly." To thoughtful observers the special role of the winged god presents many enigmas. In Egypt, for example, the hieroglyph for the great god Horus is a falcon, but the wings of the falcon, in early Egyptian art, do not convey the sense of "flight" (as one should expect, if the god acquired his wings for a "natural" purpose). Rather the wings—always outstretched—define the limits of the Cosmos, and it is not easy to see how the Egyptians could have arrived at this consistent notion through observation of what we call the natural world today. Horus is "the venerable bird in whose shadow is the wide earth; Lord of the Two Lands under whose wings is the circuit of heaven [the Cosmos]."1523 Concerning this image of Horus, Frankfort writes, ". . . The central problem, the relation between god and falcon, seems entirely insoluble."1524

What powers did the ancients seek to represent by the spread wings of the divine eagle, hawk, or falcon—or the extended wings of the purely mythical "thunder-bird" described around the world? The Egyptians called the cosmic island of beginnings the "Great Foundation Ground of the Ruler of the Wing"1525 almost as if the Wing possessed a character of its own. The divinized Wing marched around the island, according to the texts.1526

Few comparative mythologists seem to have recognized that a common image of the cosmic bird prevails throughout the world, and this image corresponds directly to the pillared sun-in-crescent . Rather than

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1518 Gaster, *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament*, 5.

1519 Melville, *op. cit.*, 32.

1520 Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* Vol. I, 28-29; Graves and Patai, *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis*, 55.

1521 Cook, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 342, citing Orphic Frag. 49, 3.

1522 Agrawala, *Sparks from the Vedic Fire*, 52-55.

1523 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, 37.

1524 *Ibid.*, 143.

1525 Reymond, *The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple*, 16.

1526 *Ibid.*, 120-21.

portray the winged beast either in flight or in a seemingly normal resting position, the artists regularly depicted it virtually standing on its tail feathers, with its wings spread upward to form a crescent.

Figure 116. Examples of the winged divinity on the cylinder seals of western Asia.

Figure 117. The primeval eagle, from the Mesopotamian city of Lagash.

Figure 118. Egyptian eagle, with symbols of “life.”

Figure 120. The American Indian thunder-bird.

In figs. 116, 117, 118 & 120 I include examples from Western Asia to the Americas. The reader will see that certain of the instances are virtually indistinguishable—and all present the sacred bird in the same “unnatural” way.

In Homer's hymn to Selene, the poet extols "the long-winged Moon."[1527] But does the lunar crescent alone suggest extended wings? It is only in connection with the cosmic form that the crescent's role as wings takes on meaning. And this is the very crescent which the ancients also knew as the sacred horn, the ship, and the upraised arms.

As seen in fig. 121, the wings of the cosmic falcon enclose and protect the deified king, in precisely the same fashion as the Ka-arms. A review of the artistic tradition shows that the wings of the great god or goddess melt into the divinity's extended arms in such a way as to become indistinguishable from them. The identity is also confirmed in Egyptian texts, where the arms of Re are called "the two birds of Ptah."[1528] A text from the tomb of Ramesses VI invokes the great god's "two wings, the arms of Tay."[1529]

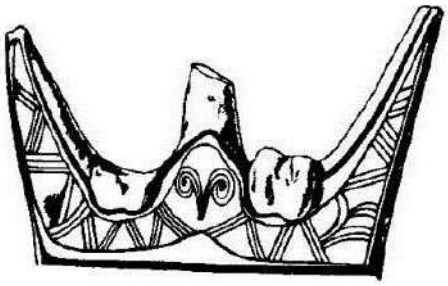


Figure 121. The cosmic falcon.

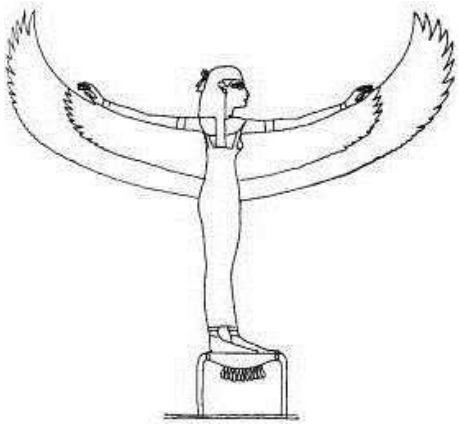
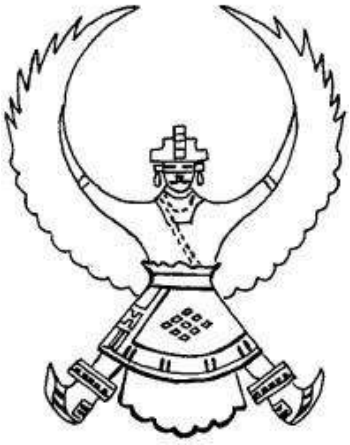


Figure 122. The winged goddess Nut.



1527 Evelyn-White, *Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, 459.

1528 Piankoff, *Litany of Re*, 54.

1529 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 368.

Figure 123. Zuni winged goddess.

Figure 124. Spartan goddess Artemis Orthia.

Adding to the "unnatural" character of the winged divinity is the continual association of wings and horns. The great god may be called either a winged bull or a horned bird. Moreover, it is clear that the combination of the two images did not result from syncretism (a later merging of incompatible or once independent traditions). Frankfort acknowledges "the simultaneous validity of these views of the king," insisting that the winged and horned aspects of the god are "a primitive feature and not the product of the syncretism of later times." Noting this dual aspect of the god Horus and his mother-spouse Hathor, Frankfort writes: "The mingling of the falcon and cattle images in the relationship of Horus and Hathor is not due to syncretism. It recurs in the case of the war-god Monthu of Thebes, who was conceived as a falcon but was also manifest in the Buches bull. The royal titulary shows it, too, for after Thutmosis I the name which is crowned with the falcon and is called the Horus- or Ka-name regularly includes the epithet 'strong bull.' The palette of Narmer illustrates how little ancients were disturbed by this simultaneous use of the two images. It shows the king's victory three times, once as a man destroying the enemy chief with his mace, once as the Horus falcon holding him in subjection with a rope passed through his nose, and once as a 'strong bull' demolishing enemy strongholds."[1530]

If the Egyptians were not bothered by this paradoxical duality, it was for a simple reason: *the great god's shining horns were also his wings!* This is why the Apis bull was pictured with outstretched wings upon its back[1531] (fig. 76a) and why the portrait of the Bakha bull shows a vulture extending its wings over the bull's hindquarters.[1532] (fig. 76b)

The same winged bull, of course, is common to Mesopotamian ritual (fig. 126) and passes into Hebrew cherubim, protectors of the divine throne. The wings of the cherubim "reached from one end of the world to the other."[1533]

1530 *Op. cit.*, 173.

1531 Budge, I 74.

1532 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 437.

1533 Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 122; Lenormant, *Les Origines*, Vol.I, 112*ff.*

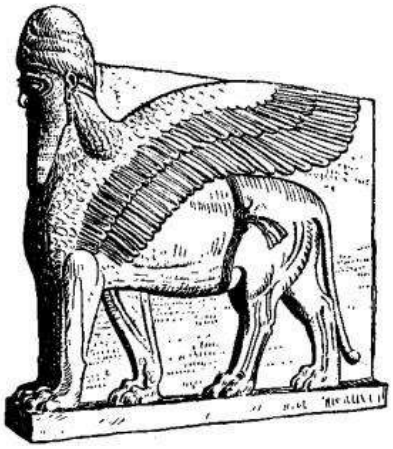


Figure 126. Assyrian winged bull.

Further evidence is provided by the winged ship, which occurs in almost every segment of the world.[1534] While it may not be immediately clear from the later, more fanciful versions of the bird-ship, it is abundantly clear in the earliest sources that *the wings and the ship are the same thing.* In the Egyptian *Pyramid Texts*, the expanded wings constitute the ship of the gods—just as the image suggests:

O you gods who cross over on the wing of Thoth to yonder side of the Winding Waterway.[1535]

. . . Ferry me over, O Thoth, on the tip of your wing as Sokar who presides over the Bark of Righteousness.[1536]

O wings of Thoth, ferry me across, do not leave me boatless.[1537]

O Thoth . . . put me on the tip of your wing on yonder northern side of the Winding Waterway.[1538]

Surely it is no coincidence that the symbol of Thoth, the master of the wing-ship, was the crescent-enclosure . The wings of the winged god or goddess answer to the illuminated portion of the circumpolar band. The subject is a winged circle, as one discerns in numerous representations of the primeval sun's dwelling. Whether it is the Egyptian Aten, or the Assyro-Babylonian enclosure of the sun, the Greek wheels of Ixion, Dionysus, or Triptolemus, the Hindu world wheel or Chakra, the Mexican "shield" of the sun-god—the enclosure consistently appears with wings and/or tail feathers. If the ancients soon forgot the special form of the winged enclosure (*i.e.*,), they did not lose the general idea.

1534 Gelling, *The Chariot of the Sun*, 120*ff.*; Magoun, *The Kalevala*, 37-38; O'Neill, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 1,009, 1,012.

1535 *Pyramid Text* 595.

1536 *Pyramid Text* 1429.

1537 *Pyramid Text* 1176.

1538 *Pyramid Text* 1377.

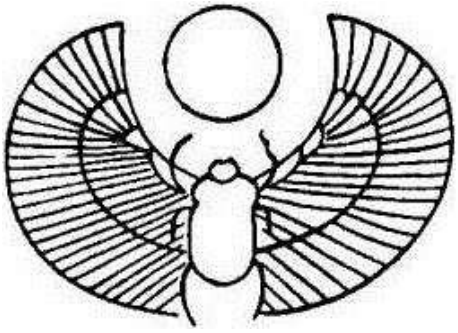


Figure 127. The Egyptian winged Kheprer, the Turning One.

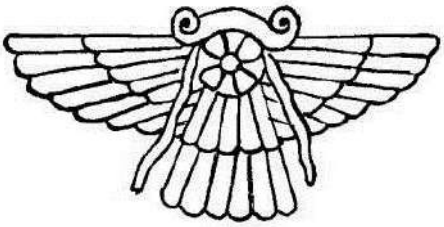


Figure 128. The Assyrian winged circle.

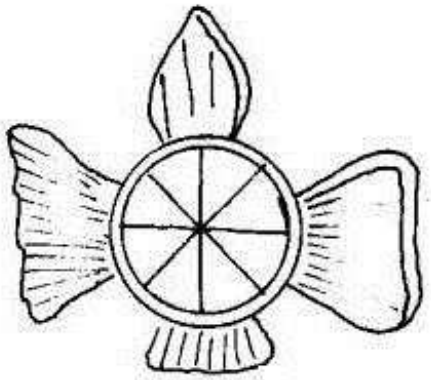


Figure 129. The Hindu Chakra or winged wheel of the "sun."

Figure 130. Inscription at Mehterhane, the Central Prison of Constantinople.

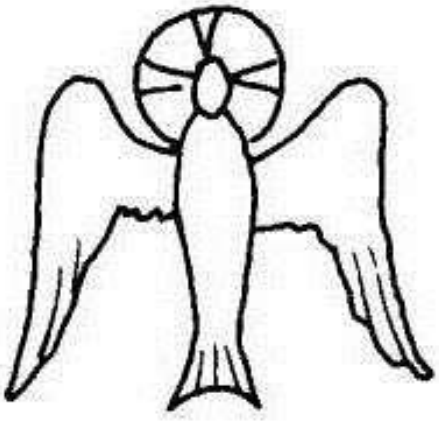


Figure 131. Drawing from a thirteenth-century window in Auxerre catherdral.

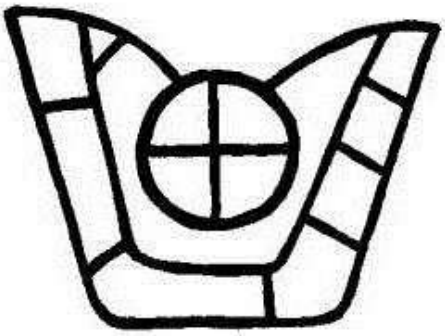


Figure 132. Mexican winged bird.

Figure 133. Detail from fig. 74 showing enclosed sun on back of bird.

Figure 134. (a) Persian Ahura Mazda, dwelling in the winged enclosure;

Figure 134. (b) Assyrian winged god Asshur, in the winged enclosure. Note that both the Assyrian and Persian examples connect the god's skirt with the tail feathers. In the ancient Mesopotamian pictographs the "skirt" means "mountain."

Figure 135. Aztec shield, with tail feathers.

Figure 136. Mesopotamian winged circles confirm **(a)** that the band encloses the sun-cross and

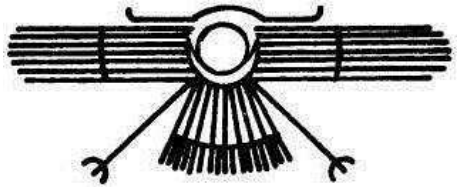


Figure 136. (b) that the band displays a crescent.

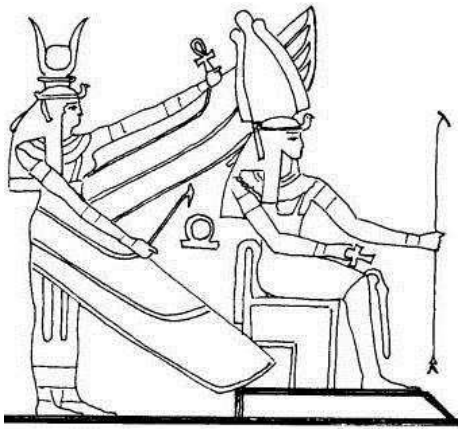


Figure 137. Isis, protecting the sun-god with her extended wings.

The relation of the wings to the enclosure is vital to any meaningful interpretation of the winged god or goddess. Surely we are not simply dealing with a venerated bird gradually translated into a god (as many authorities propose). From the beginning, the wings belonged to the Saturnian band. In many instances the artists show the great god residing within or issuing from the winged circle (figs. 134a, 134b).

In the symbolism of the Egyptian goddess Nut one sees the underlying identity of the outstretched wings and the cosmic womb. Though Nut personifies the band of the Cosmos, she is often depicted standing erect with arms and wings extended outward and upward (fig. 122) in striking accord with the prototypal form . The spread wings are those which enclose and protect the central sun, for the king beseeches the goddess: "Mother Nut, spread thy wings over me, encircle (me) with thy arms in health and life that I may be *inside* thee, that

thou (mayest) be my protection."[1539] To be embraced by the outspread wings is to dwell *within* the great goddess, in the womb. Daily the goddess "conceives you, she bears you, she puts you within her wing."[1540] Nothing could be more futile than attempting to resolve the enigmatic language in conventional (or "natural") terms. But when referred to the overlapping images of the Saturnian configuration , the ritual terminology acquires an extraordinary precision. The outstretched and upraised wings actually *do* enclose the sun within the celestial womb.

No less remarkable is the location of the all-seeing Eye upon the crescent wing or wings:

The Eye of Horus gleams upon the wing of Thoth.[1541]

The Eye of Horus is placed on the wing of his brother Set.[1542]

All figures of the primeval bird reveal a common feature: they dwell upon the cosmic mountain. Indeed, as already observed, it is the Mount, rendered as the "tail feathers," which makes intelligible the common interpretation of the polar crescent as outstretched wings.

Egyptian myths say that at the dawn of the world the great god took the form of the Bennu bird or Phoenix, radiating light from its extended wings and *perched atop the Primeval Hill.* The Bennu was the "Soul" of Re, which means that it issued directly from Re, congealing out of the primeval matter, or waters. (Thus *bennut* means "matter" or "issue," while *bennu* means the "bread" of the gods, the primeval matter organized into a circle.)

Figure 138. Prehistoric Hopi image of winged earth mother.

1539 Piankoff, *Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon*, 46. [Emphasis added.]

1540 *Pyramid Text* 1370.

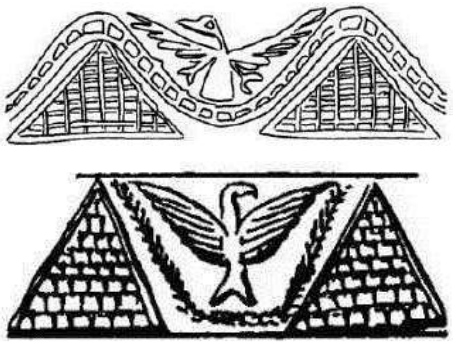
1541 *Pyramid Text* 976.

1542 *Pyramid Text* 1742.

Figure 139. Mesopotamian eagle supporting divine figure between its wings.

The relation of the Primeval Hill to the Phoenix or Bennu is summarized by Clark: "Since the waters were in absolute darkness the emergence of God meant the coming of light, the first morning. For the Heliopolitans morning was marked by the shining of light on an erect pillar or pyramidion on a support which could reflect the rays of the rising sun. At the beginning a light-bird, the Phoenix, had alighted on the sacred stand, known as the Benben, to initiate the great age of the visible God. The rising of the mound and the appearance of the Phoenix are not consecutive events but parallel statements, two aspects of the supreme creative moment."1543 To the same elementary image belongs the winged Khepera, resting upon the tet or pillar of the Cosmos, and supporting the Aten with outstretched wings.1544 The *Pyramid Texts* speak of the "Mountain of the *zehzeh*-bird,"1545 or "the Pillar of the *zehzeh*-bird."1546

Similarly, the Sumerian Imdugud, who "looks down upon the mountain,"1547 was said to have his home on the northern Mount Masius; while his counterparts—the Persian Saena or Simurgh and the Hindu Garuda dwelt upon the polar mountains of Hera Berezaiti and Meru.1548 Accordingly, the Assyro-Babylonians consistently located the winged circle of the "sun" atop the cosmic pillar.1549 The natives of Northwest Siberia fix upon their symbols of the world pillar a wooden figure of a bird sometimes with two heads. The winged figures which so often adorn the summit of American Indian totem poles provide an obvious parallel.



1543 *Op. cit.*, 39.

1544 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 220.

1545 *Pyramid Text* 389.

1546 *Pyramid Text* 2243.

1547 Sjöberg and Bergmann, *op. cit.*, 99.

1548 Albright, "The Goddess of Life and Wisdom," 268, note 3.

1549 Van Buren, *Symbols of the Gods in Mesopotamian Art*, 96-99.

Figure 140. Mesopotamian cylinder seals indicate the close relation of the "sun"-bird's wings to the two peaks of the cosmic mountain.

Like all figures of the crescent, the expanded wings, alternately embracing the central sun from the left and from the right (or from above and below), appear in the role of the twins. The goddess Nut may be presented in the primary form ; but two secondary divinities flank the goddess to the right and left, extending their wings toward each other so as to form a complete enclosure. These winged twins are equivalent to Isis and Nephthys, the "two kites" who, standing to the right and left, together enclose the sun-god within their wings.

A spell of the *Coffin Texts* reads:

> *Isis comes and Nephthys comes, one of them from the west* [literally the right] *and one of them from the east* [literally the left]*, one of them as a kite and one of them as a screecher . . . They prevent Horus of the Two Lands from putrefying.*1550

Compare this line from the *Pyramid Texts*:

> *. . . This King has become pure through the eye of Horus, his ill is removed by the Two Kites of Osiris.*1551

To be purified and protected within the Eye is to be made strong by the "Two Kites" of the left and right (,), whose counterpoised wings shadow out the full circle of the Eye. The same twin birds compose the crown:

> *O you two kites who are on the wings of Thoth, you two who are on the crown . . .*1552

Thus the goddesses Isis and Nephthys are said to have placed themselves upon the head of the great god "as the two kites" and these, in turn, are identified as the two uraei serpents and the two Eyes—all figures of the bisected womb or enclosure.1553 And the proof of this identity is the very name of the "two kites." They are the *Tcherti*, which means nothing more than the two halves of the *tcher*, the "enclosure" or "boundary," of the Aten .

Interconnected Symbols

A comprehensive discussion of the Saturnian crescent's wide-ranging mythical forms would require vastly more space than available here, but a brief summary should be sufficient to indicate the breadth of the symbolism. Supplementing the imagery discussed above are the following mythical versions of the crescent:

The Plant Of Life

Egyptian sources relate that the original dwelling of the solitary god took the form of a shining lotus—called "the Great Lotus that issued from the pool in the Island of the Two Flames, the Province of the Beginning." The lotus "initiated light" at the "First Occasion in the High Hill at the Beginning of Coming into Existence."1554

According to the legend, the lotus sprang up from the watery abyss, emerging from the Khu (luminous matter) erupting from the creator. One of the Egyptian names for this plant of life was *Nefer Tem* ("the young or beautiful Tem"), a personification of the "North Wind" or breath of Re. In Chapter CLXXIV of the *Book of the*

1550 Faulkner, *op. cit.*, 68.

1551 *Pyramid Text* 312.

1552 *Pyramid Text* 1254.

1553 Budge, *The Papyrus of Ani*, 32.

1554 Reymond, *op. cit.*, 68.

Dead, the deceased announced "I grow bright like Nefer-Tem, who is the lotus at the nostrils of Re, when he comes forth in the Mount of Glory each day." Re is thus "that great god who is within the lotus bud of gold."[1555]

Inscriptions at Dendera show the king offering a lotus to the god Horus with the words, "I offer thee the flower, which was in the beginning, the glorious lily of the great water. Thou camest forth from the midst of its leaves in the town of Chmun (Hermopolis magna) and didst lighten the earth, which was still wrapped in darkness."[1556]

Parallels to the Egyptian cosmic lotus, as the home of the great god, will be found in all sections of the world, including the Americas. The Mayans knew the flower as "the form of the moisture of heaven, the substance of heaven, the yellow blossom of heaven."[1557] Looking back to the creation a Mayan text recalls, "Then it was that the flower sprang up, wide open . . . Thereupon the heart of the flower came forth to set itself in motion. Four-fold [*can-hek*, literally "four-branched"] was the place of the flower and Ah Kin Xocbiltun was set in the centre."[1558]

Figure 141. The primeval sun's birth in the lotus.

Figure 142. The man-child Horus on the lotus blossom.

Much the same tradition occurs in Mesopotamia, where a Babylonian text depicts the plant of life emerging in Eridu, the dwelling on the cosmic sea:

1555 Clark, *op. cit.*, 67.

1556 Mariette, *Denderah*, 1, 55a.

1557 Roys, *The Book of the Chilam Balam*, 131.

1558 *Ibid.*, 105.

(In) Eridu a stalk grew over-shadowing: in a holy place did it become green;

its root was of white crystal which stretched toward the deep;

(before) Ea was its course in Eridu, teeming with fertility;

its seat was the central place of the earth: its foliage was the couch of Zikum (the primeval mother).

Into the heart of its holy house which spread its shade like a forest hath no man entered . . .

In the midst of it was Tammuz.[1559]

Figure 143. Tut-Ankh-Amon, presented in the form of Nefer-Tem.

This "bright plant which grows up from the apsu [the cosmic sea]"[1560] is clearly an early prototype of the famous Hindu *soma* and Iranian *haoma* plants both recognized as belonging originally to the gods in heaven.[1561] (Thus the haoma is "the first of the trees planted by Ahura Mazda in the fountains of life.")[1562]

Egyptian, Hindu, and Buddhist sources either show the head of the great god emerging from a lotus or depict the god in a resting position in or above the lotus.

It is logical to refer such imagery of the lotus-seat to the archetypal sun-in-crescent and all the more so because the plant of life is regularly identified with the crescent "moon."[1563] The soma and haoma plants are widely discussed as figures of the "moon." The Mayan Book of Chilam Balam refers to the "moon" as the "flower of the night."[1564] Similarly, the Sumero-Babylonian crescent of Nannar or Sin is the "lofty plant, magnificent, whose abundance never ceases."[1565]

We have seen that the Babylonians depicted the crescent of Sin as the support, or lower half, of the world wheel. The relationship illuminates Hindu and Buddhist symbolism of the cosmic wheel resting in the *expanded leaf of a lotus* (fig. 144). The lotus supports and reaches around the celestial "land" and is thus always identified with the mother goddess, the female personification of the wheel. In the ritual of the *Satapatha Brahmana* a lotus leaf becomes the "birthplace of Agni" and "the symbol of his womb." Upon the

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1559 Sayce, *op. cit.*, 238.

1560 Albright, "*The Mouth of the Rivers*," 193.

1561 See, for example, the discussion in Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 290.

1562 Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 130.

1563 *Ibid.*, 131.

1564 Roys, *op. cit.*, 94.

1565 Combe, *op. cit.*, 99.

symbolic lotus leaf the priest lays a round gold disk said to represent the "sun." "The lotus means the Waters, and this earth is a leaf thereof . . . and this same earth is Agni's womb," reads the text.1566 It is imagery of this sort which yields such epithets of the Hindu great god as "lotus-born," "lotus-seated," or "lotus-navelled."1567

The connection of the lotus and "lotus-born" god with the sun-in-crescent is equally evident in the equation of the lotus and the cosmic ship. In the Egyptian system the ship and the lotus are synonymous: the great god sails in a *lotus-ship*, which the artists illustrate either by a lotus blossom in the centre of the ship or by a lotus terminating either one end or both ends of the vessel.1568

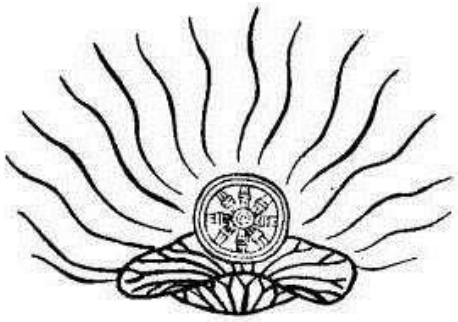

Figure 144. Hindu world wheel resting in lotus leaf.

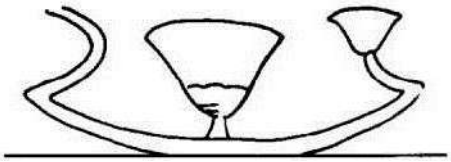

Figure 145. Lotus blossom=ship as mythical image of the Saturnian crescent.

And the same equation occurs among the Hindus, who tell us that the cosmic ship Argha was the lotus on which the great god sailed in the beginning.1569

Now if the blossom of the plant of life is the circumpolar crescent, one can assume that the "stem" is the cosmic mountain. The Egyptians represented the great god's "sceptre" as a lotus and in both the hieroglyphs and in art this sceptre becomes the pillar upholding "heaven" .1570 Lotus-pillars are often depicted supporting the god's shrine or throne,1571 while at other times the great god is depicted resting upon a lotus column.

But the plant of life was also represented as a papyrus—and called "the Gleaming Sceptre of Papyrus."1572 A text published by Dumichen says "Thou art the Eye of Re, at the tip of the papyrus-stem."1573 Of course other

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1566 Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 19-20.

1567 *Ibid.*, 17-18.

1568 Morez and Schhubert, *Der Gott auf der Blume*, 38.

1569 Faber, *Origins*, Vol. II, 217; vol. I, 19. In Egyptian ritual there is also a fascinating relationship of the plant of life and the outstretched arms of heaven (the Ka). *Pyramid Text* 544a has the king proclaiming himself to be the "flower which issued from the Ka."

1570 Budge, *Gods*, Vol. I, 413, 439.

1571 See example in Budge, *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 29.

1572 Clark, *op. cit.*, 163.

texts say that it is the light-pillar Shu which holds aloft the Eye, but there can be no contradiction: the Egyptian word *shu* means both "light-pillar" and "papyrus."

The identity of the two powers is also explicit in Hindu iconography. The soma plant, to which many hymns of the *Rig Veda* are devoted, is "the stabilizer and supporter of heaven."1574 The introductory verse of the *Dasakumaraccrita* includes as a figure of the world axis "the stalk of the lotus where Brahma resides."1575 Of the cosmic lotus in Buddhism, M. Mus writes: "The prolongation of the stem, which is the axis of the sensible world, bears at the summit of the universe the spiritual lotus-throne . . ."1576 Thus does the cosmic Mount Meru become the "lotus-mountain,"1577 and in the same way the Iranian haoma plant appears as the "imperishable pillar of life."1578

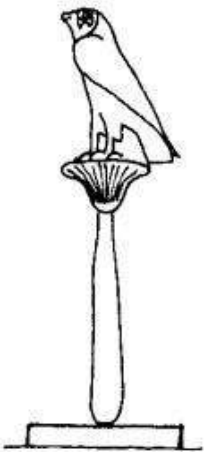


Figure 146. The Lotus column surmounted by the Horus-falcon.

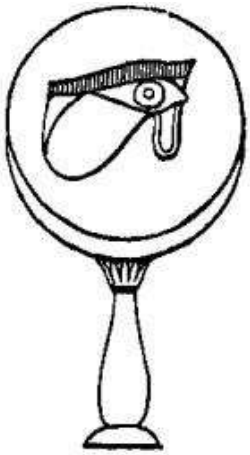


Figure 147. Egyptian Eye (=crescent-enclosure) supported on the lotus column.

1573 Quoted in O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 467.

1574 Bhawe, *The Soma Hymns of the Rig Veda*, 82.

1575 Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 89, note 139.

1576 Quoted in *ibid.*, 55.

1577 O'Neill, *op. cit.*, 400.

1578 *Ibid.*, 290.

Figure 148. Saturn riding on his serpentine chariot and wielding his scythe (from Poeticon Astronomicon, Venice, 1485).

Sword

Saturn comes to power wielding his curved sword or scythe, which writers generally connect with the crescent "moon." The Greek Kronos carries as his special weapon the curved harpe and it has often been proposed that this weapon lies behind the relatively late astronomical sign of Saturn, . The harpe and the winged *harpies* (birdlike female monsters) surely trace to the same root. (That is, "sword" and "wings" refer to the same cosmic form.)

In a Sumerian hymn, Ninurta, or Saturn, invokes the "sickle of my Anuship" [*i.e.*, of kingship] and the weapon is called at once *sharur* and *shargaz*—both names of Sin, the crescent "moon."[1579] Sin is the "sickle" and the "curved sabre" of the great god.[1580]

The Egyptians knew the sword as the *khepesh*, written with the signs and , or as the *ma*, whose sign, , depicts a sickle fashioned from the jawbone of an animal. The *Pyramid Texts* identify the great god's sword as "a sharp strong horn"[1581] (sword=horn). But *khepesh* also means the "shoulder" or "two arms" of heaven. And here the symbolism meshes precisely with that of the Babylonian system, which declares the sickle of Sin to be "the two arms" of Enlil, the cosmic mountain.

That the sword shares in the coherent imagery of the Saturnian crescent is suggested by other traditions also. In Genesis 3:24, Yahweh is said to have placed in *front* (translators say to the "East") "of the garden of Eden kerubim and the flaming blade of the sword which turns, to keep the way of the tree of life." If the thesis presented here is correct, the winged *kerubim* refer to the same revolving crescent as the turning sword. Many scholars logically connect the Hebrew *kerubim* with the Assyro-Babylonian *kirubi*, the winged and horned beasts who in the form of twins guard and define the limits of the great god's enclosure. In the Assyrian vocabulary, *kirub* means "bull," while *kirubu* designates a large species of bird of prey. The revolving "sword" of Genesis, on the other hand, is the *khereb*, a "curved sickle," recognized as the Hebrew counterpart of the Greek harpe and the Egyptian *khepesh*.[1582]

The Altar

1579 Combe, *op. cit.*, 11; Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 91.

1580 Langdon, *op. cit.*, 27.

1581 *Pyramid Text* 240.

1582 Lenormant, *Les Origines* Vol. I, 129*ff.*

For reasons which I intend to examine at length in a subsequent volume, the Saturnian crescent was the receptacle of a primordial "sacrifice." Together the crescent and cosmic mountain formed "the Altar of the World."

Egyptian hieroglyphs record the altar by the sign . Upon the altar—called the Altar of Hetep ("rest") or Altar of the Uatchet (Eye)—rests all the food and drink of the celestial habitation.

In the *Book of the Dead*, the great god comes forth "in the city of Annu, upon the altar of the lady of the two lands," and it is clear that the Egyptians conceived the altar as supporting and embracing the entire celestial domain (or twin "lands").1583 Hence the sign —glyph of the "holy domain"—shows the womb of Nut , resting on the altar.

Always, the altar conveys the same significance as the primordial "world." Among the Hindus, notes Eliade, "the building of the altar was conceived as a creation of the world. The water with which the clay was mixed was the same as the primeval waters."1584 "As large as the altar is, so large is the earth," reads the *Satapatha Brahmana.*1585

The same altar may be termed "the navel of the earth . . . the lap [womb] of Aditi," in close correspondence with Egyptian symbolism.1586

Hebrew and Muslim thought, according to Wensinck, considered the altar "as a symbolic representation of the earth."1587 A Midrash asks, "Where is the navel? In Jerusalem. But the navel itself is the altar."1588 Of the primeval altar, tradition says, "Its top reached to heaven."1589

The god upon the altar is simply the "sun" resting in the pillared crescent . (Hence the image of the sun-in-crescent upon the Sabaean altar in fig. 63.) Early prototypes of the altar throughout the ancient world not only connect it with the central pillar of the Cosmos1590 but suggest a radical association with the cosmic bull, while altars from Persia to Crete to Africa were either decorated with horns or given the shape of horns. "The horned altar" and "the horns of the altar" were, of course, common phrases among the ancient Hebrews.

Above And Below, Left And Right

More than once, in discussing common translations of ancient sources, I have had occasion to refer to the inappropriate use of the phrases "east and west," "north and south." and "heaven and earth." Such terminology, I have suggested, arises from the habit of reading *solar* imagery into non-solar texts and of interpreting the great god's cosmic dwelling in *terrestrial* terms.

1583 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 476.

1584 *Patterns* 372.

1585 Eggeling, *op. cit.*, Part I, 86.

1586 *Ibid.*, 213, note 2.

1587 "The Ideas of the Western Semites," 10.

1588 *Ibid.*, 11.

1589 *Ibid.*

1590 Schwabe, *Archetype und Tierkreis*, 377*ff*.

Without attempting to provide a complete analysis of the problem (which I intend to explore in a separate volume on Egyptian religion), I shall simply indicate the manner in which the question can be resolved by reference to the Saturnian configuration.

Of course, there can be little progress toward an improved understanding of ancient religious texts until the translators and commentators acknowledge the celestial character of the imagery. From start to finish the hymns and liturgies deal with cosmic figures and cosmic events. And when these mythical figures and events are connected with a primordial "land" it is imperative that one understand this "land" as the enclosure of the original great god, who is Saturn. The texts deal, not with geography, but with *cosmography*—the map of the celestial kingdom. In relation to Saturn's dwelling the words which translators render as "east" and "west" actually mean something quite different. And while the modern phrase "heaven and earth" *suggests* little concrete meaning, the archaic terms so translated convey a very specific sense.

In the Egyptian language the word rendered as "east" is *Abtet* (*Abt* or *Abti*), while the word translated "west" is *Amentet* (or *Amenti*). To what did the Egyptians refer by these words?

If the first mistake of the translators is to assume that Abtet and Amentet are geographical terms, the second is to assume that they *necessarily* refer to opposite regions, or directions. Standard translations are based on the premise that the "sun" rises in the east and sets in the west. Yet to anyone following this logic ancient Egyptian texts will leave the impression that the priests were continually forgetful of the place of sunrise and sunset. If Amentet was the "west," why did the Egyptians repeatedly describe the great god "coming forth" or "renewing himself" in Amentet? I cite below a few conventional translations:

Behold the coming forth from the West.[1591]

Osiris, He who arises in Health, He at the Head of the West.[1592]

The arms of the inhabitants of the West receive thee in thy forms of glory and rejuvenation.[1593]

I make myself young (in) the fair West.[1594]

When thou comest forth in peace there arise shouts of delight to thee, O thou lord of heaven, thou prince of the West.[1595]

Of such imagery as this, Kristensen writes: "What was meant is evidently that the sun, when it goes down does not die but reaches the hidden fountain of life."[1596] But one naturally remains skeptical of such conjecture. Do the hymns cited above portray the solar orb "when it goes down"? The truth is that if we substituted "east" for "west" in these lines they would appear to solar mythologists as perfectly reasonable descriptions of the rising sun. Rather than the "west," Amentet is simply the Holy Land, the primeval enclosure. The head, or governor, of Amentet is the central sun, which does not rise or set, but "goes in and out" (*i.e.*, grows bright and diminishes) with the full cycle of each "day." The great god's "coming forth in Amentet" signifies the *beginning* of the day. (An equivalent phrase, "coming forth by day," occurs repeatedly in Egyptian texts). Thus Chapter CVII of the *Book of the Dead* is "The Chapter of Going Into and Coming Out from the Gate of the Gods of Amentet."[1597] Chapter XVII extols the great god's "coming out and going in" within Amentet.[1598]

1591 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 217.

1592 Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri*, 76.

1593 *Ibid.*, 37.

1594 *Ibid.*

1595 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 85.

1596 Quoted in Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri*, 30.

1597 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 314.

It is the same thing to say that the god grows bright and diminishes within the womb of the mother goddess. There was, in fact, a goddess Ament whom the Egyptians equated with Isis, while Isis herself was "the Divine Mother, Lady of Amentet."[1599] The phrase has no original connection with geography; it simply refers to Isis as the womb or enclosure of the Holy Land above. Hathor is the same goddess: "Hathor, Lady of Amentet . . . , Lady of the Holy Country."[1600] Elsewhere the texts identify Amentet as the circumpolar Tuat, the womb of Nut.[1601] There is no association with the geographical "west."

To reside within the Holy Land of Amentet is to rest in the mother-womb, which goes by many names. In text after text the priests seek to show that the various names of the Holy Land signified the same enclosure. When the *Book of the Dead* calls Osiris the "mighty one who comest forth from Nut, thou king in the city of Nifu-ur, thou Governor of Amentet, thou lord of Abtu (Abydos),"[1602] the reference is not to different dwellings but to different names of the same dwelling.

What has caused so much confusion is the fact that the Holy Land is a *bisected* circle. The central sun is he who "unites the *two* Tuats, the *two* regions of Amentet."[1603] Here one must reckon with the paradox of the celestial twins. *In naming the two divisions of the Holy Land the Egyptians brought together two independent names for the enclosure as a whole, pairing them as opposites.*

This development of the language stands out in the case of Isis and Nephthys, both of whom, independently, denote the full circle of the Aten . Isis is the "house," "chamber," or "throne" of the central sun, while Nephthys is the "Lady of the House" (or simply "Lady-House"). As a *pair*, however, Isis and Nephthys personify two halves of the circle, the "left and the right," suggested by the counterpoised positions of the revolving crescent .

In the same way the Egyptians paired the name Amentet with another name of the same dwelling—Abtet—yielding the dual kingdom of Amentet-Abtet.[1604] When joined as opposites, Amentet and Abtet are precisely synonymous with the twins Isis and Nephthys. By this union, Amentet acquires the literal meaning "region of the right" and Abtet, "region of the left." The idea that the god-king, standing in the centre of the enclosure, balances the divisions of the left and right will be found repeatedly in both the texts and in art. That translators commonly use the terms "east and "west" has caused a major confusion in conventional translations.

Like Amentet, in other words, the Egyptian term Abtet (conventionally translated "east") may refer either to the entire celestial kingdom or to one of its two divisions. Fundamentally, Abtet is the sacred land at the centre and summit. The king, in the *Pyramid Texts*, seeks to attain this dwelling, with the words, "May I ascend and lift myself up to the sky as the great star in the midst of Abtet." "I have come into heaven, and I embrace my seat which is in Abtet," reads a line from the *Book of the Dead.*[1605] Here, any connection of Abtet with the "east" or the solar orb exists only in the mind of the translators.

1598 Budge, *The Papyrus of Ani*, 27.

1599 Piankoff, *Mythological Papyri*, 93.

1600 *Ibid.*, 79.

1601 "Hail Re! His resting place is the Tuat; what he traverses is the Beautiful Amentet." Piankoff, *Pyramid of Unas*, 30. "The disk is in the Tuat, the disk rests in Amentet." Piankoff, *Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 376. "The souls of Re in Amentet are exalted, and in the zone of the Tuat the souls . . . cry out in their songs of exultation unto the soul of Re who dwelleth therein . . . O ye Hetepu gods, grant ye that I may enter into the Tuat, and let me make a way into the beautiful Amentet." Budge, *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 612-13.

1602 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 387.

1603 Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, 76. [Emphasis added.]

1604 *Pyramid Text* 1038.

1605 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 516-17.

The same inappropriate use of terms is evident in the phrase "heaven and earth" recurring in virtually all accepted translations. "The universe as a whole was referred to as 'heaven and earth,'" states Frankfort.[1606] The two terms in question are *pet* (translated "heaven") and *ta* (translated "earth").

Literally, the phrase "pet and ta" means "the above and below." Numerous Egyptian illustrations indicate that, together, the two divisions composed an enclosure around the "sun"-god. As opposites the *pet* and *ta* mean the celestial twins, here personifying the revolving crescent in its alternate positions above and below the stationary god.

But this does not mean that *pet* necessarily denotes "above" any more than *ta* necessarily means "below." As a matter of fact, many signs extol "two pet," one above and one below (denoted by the sign and its inverse). And few phrases are more common in Egyptian sources than the "two ta," explicitly referring to the upper and lower divisions of the celestial kingdom. Fundamentally, the *pet* is the twofold circle of Saturn's Cosmos, and the *ta* is the same circle, conceived as an enclosure of "land" around the central sun. *It is only as a pair that pet and ta acquire the meaning* "*above and below.*" And in no sense does the translation "heaven and earth" convey the tangible significance of the terms.

The Egyptian "circle of above and below" is the womb of Nut, the "holy abode" (written with the sign).[1607] Yet Nut's identity with the full circle did not prevent the Egyptians from pairing Nut with another goddess, Naunet, so that together they represented the two *halves* of the circle, represented by the signs of the "above" (Nut) and the "below" (Naunet). In the same way the priests joined Nut with the male figure Geb, identifying Nut with the upper half of the enclosure and Geb with the lower. According to tradition the separation of the portions was carried out by the god Shu, the pillar with outstretched arms. *Indeed, it was the arms of Shu (*i.e., *the Saturnian crescent) which divided the circle into upper and lower regions, according to the original tradition.*

The division of the enclosure into male (lower) and female (upper) halves gave rise to two interrelated signs of masculine and feminine connotation. The sign depicts the male power (usually translated "lord") while the same semicircular image inverted (and in smaller scale) signifies "feminine." Together the upper and lower hemispheres compose the complete circle of the Aten or *shen* bond. To translate masculine and feminine divisions as "heaven" and "earth" simply destroys the interrelated symbolism of the enclosure.

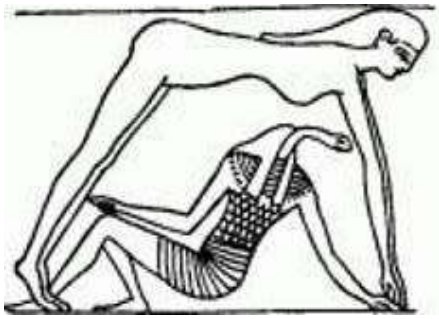


Figure 149. Nut and Geb, as the Above and the Below.

The terminology in question ("left and right," "above and below") concerns celestial regions marked out by the revolving Saturnian crescent, which is the ever-turning face of the central sun (or the "two" faces of the twin god). This is why the sign , which may also be presented inversely , means, among other things, *heru*, or "face." The *herui* are the "two faces" of Horus, or of Horus and Set, acknowledged personifications of the "Upper Land" and the "Lower Land."

Pertaining to the same imagery is the notion of two semicircular "mounds" joined so as to form a full circle. The Egyptian "mound" sign is nothing more than one half of the quartered womb of Nut . Its

1606 *Op. cit.*, 19.

1607 "Nut encompasses and 'is' heaven and earth," states Neumann. *Op. cit.*, 223.

meaning is "division of the holy abode." The central sun may be designated either "the Great One in the Mound" or the dweller in "two" mounds.1608

The two mounds are the two *atenti* or *aterti*, the two halves of the Aten. *Atent*, written with the sign (one half of the elongated *shen* bond, or cartouche), signifies a "division into opposite regions." The texts speak of an *atert meht*, the "lower half" of the Aten; and an *atert shema*, the "upper half." Any attempt to understand such terminology in terrestrial terms can only yield confusion.

The divisions of the "right and left" and "above and below" are not only manifestly cosmic, their special character derives from the relation of the revolving crescent to the stationary god and his enclosure. When the crescent passes below the god it "supports" him, and when it arches above , it "bows" to him. Thus the texts say of the cosmic twins: "The two mistresses of Buto [the celestial city] accompany you to the right and left . . . , they support you and bow to you."1609 The same thing is said of the twin regions:

> *The two regions of Abtet* [the left] *and Amentet* [the right] *make adoration unto thee, bowing low and paying homage unto* [*sethes,* "supporting"] *thee*.1610

> *O luminary, the lower and upper halves of Heaven* [*pet*] *come to thee and bow low in adoration*.1611

That the *bowing* region means the upper half of the enclosure (in opposition to the "supporting" region below) is demonstrated by the symbolism of Nut. While Nut, in her relationship to Geb represents "above," this quality of the goddess may be represented either by the sign or another sign of precisely the same significance— —depicting the "above" as a *bowing* goddess.

Saturn's Day

In the revolving crescent we possess the key to Egyptian symbolism of the "day" and "night," for the crescent's position simply reflected the position of the solar orb in relation to the terrestrial observer. One should think of the revolving crescent as Saturn's ship, in which the god voyaged around the four regions ("above" , "left" , "below" , "right"), all the while standing in one place. The four positions (regions) will correspond to four segments of the archaic day:

1. The cycle began with the descent of the crescent as it moved from its position "above" (solar orb directly overhead) to its position directly to the "left" of Saturn (solar sunset). On reaching the region of the "left," Saturn and the crescent began to grow bright, due to the darkening of the heavens as the solar orb sank below the horizon. Hence, in the general symbolism of the "left and right" (Abtet and Amentet) the left is the region of "dawn" or "growing bright."

The cosmic ship, on reaching Abtet, the "left," became the *Matet* ship, whose name means "becoming strong." It was, in other words, a *descending* ship which grew bright—a fact which has frustrated many solar mythologists, who would have expected the "dawn" or "morning" to express itself in a *rising* solar bark. "I descend in the ship of the morning," states the god.1612

1608 Piankoff, *Litany of Re*, 169.

1609 Lacau, *op. cit.*, 37.

1610 Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 85.

1611 *Ibid.*, 80.

1612 *Coffin Text* 118; see also Spell 302.

Including the polar mount, the image of the "dawn" is . The Egyptians gave human form to the image in the hieroglyph , symbol of the *tua* or "morning." Mythically, the god "awakens," and the spirits of the celestial city come to life, "praising" and "supporting" the god with the descending crescent-arms. It was these aspects of the archaic dawn which supplied the Egyptian pillar-sign with its interconnected meanings: "to awaken," "to praise," "to support."

2. The supreme moment of the "day" was that at which the Saturnian crescent sat squarely upon the central pillar, the two horns of the crescent reaching equally to the left and right . At this moment the solar orb stood directly beneath the terrestrial observer, and the entire Saturnian configuration shone its brightest.

3. As the crescent traveled toward the region of the "right" (which it reached at the solar sunrise) Saturn's brilliance began to diminish. The god's vessel became the *Semktet* ship, or the ship of "becoming weak." The god "sails upstream" in the *Semktet* ship (again, a surprise to solar mythologists). In the dual kingdom of Abtet-Amentet the region of Amentet (the "right") is thus the domain of declining, or "going in."

4. The cycle was completed with the return of the crescent to the position "above" (solar orb directly overhead). This point in the cycle, when Saturn's light was most subdued, was the archaic "night."

The cycle of the day and night is one of the most pervasive themes in Egyptian art, and the key is the revolving crescent. In connection with the cosmic twins, I have already noted that the primal pair has its origin in the alternating positions of the crescent around the central sun, and that this symmetrical opposition is depicted in illustrations of the daily cycle. The artists often showed a pair of arms (=crescent) reaching around the Aten alternately from above and below, or from the left and right. These are not only pictures of the dual regions, but of the cycle of "coming forth and diminishing."

Around this cycle the Egyptians built an impressive range of symbols, and the underlying connection with the revolving crescent reflects itself in two basic rules:

1. All symbols of the "day" (in opposition to "night") have their origin in the image of the crescent "below." This is why the signs for the "lower" region generally overlap with signs for the "day." In fact, a number of interrelated ideas converge on the same celestial image (, , ,): "below," "lower," "day," "coming forth," "life," "existence," "awake," "support," "celebrate," "masculine power."

2. Similarly, the symbols of the "night" generally coincide with the symbols of the "above," all taking their meaning from the inverted crescent (, , ,), The meanings include: "above," "upper," "mound," "night, diminished," "negation, absence," "asleep," "concealment," "bowing," "feminine," "arrival" (at the top), and "completion" (of the cycle).

Here are a few of the key signs:

1. , . The signs not only portray the Khut or Mount of Glory, they signify "the coming forth" of the sun-god, who shines between the two peaks of the right and left. In this sense the signs have exactly the same meaning as the image , *i.e.*, the "day." But the mountain sign also means "the below."

While Egyptologists like to think of the two peaks as fixed on our earth, the Egyptians themselves knew that the great god "sailed" in the Khut or "revolved" round the Aten in the Khut. This is why the artists not only placed the two peaks in the revolving ship, but *often depicted them in an inverted position* *above the* Aten.

The inverted peaks simultaneously mean “the above” and “concealment” or “obscurity.” Together, the upright and inverted peaks represent both the full cycle of the day and the full circle (above and below) of the celestial kingdom.

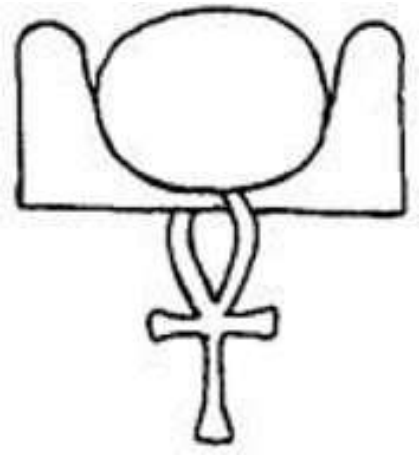


Figure 150. Khut and Ankh, interchangeable symbols of the twin-peaked mountains.

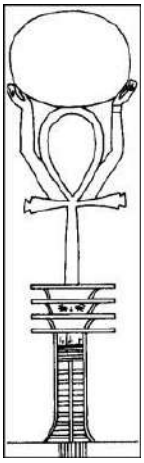


Figure 151. (a)

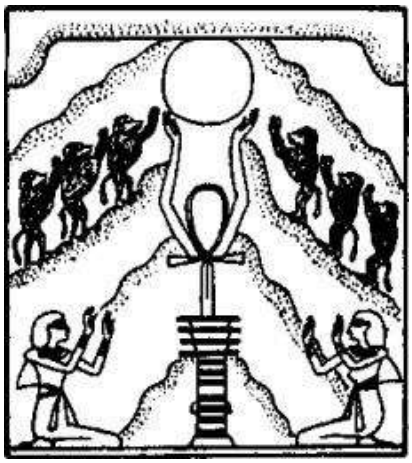


Figure 151. (b) Egyptian illustrations of the Ankh, with outstretched arms holding aloft the Aten. The Ankh issues from the Tet, the pillar of “stability.” (a & b)

2. No Egyptian sign is more familiar to the modern world than the *Ankh.* In Egyptian symbolism the Ankh corresponds in fundamental meaning to the Khut, or Mount of Glory. To convey this equation the artists either superimposed the Ankh on the two peaks (fig. 150) or showed the Aten resting, not on the Khut, but on two arms extending upward from the Ankh (figs. 151a, 151b).

The Ankh (whose origins the experts have long debated) is but a conventionalized image of the polar configuration during the period of "coming forth," or "life." We have already seen that the image of the crescent-enclosure passed into the related forms , , , . The Ankh merely adds the central pillar.

Just as the central sun "comes forth in the Mount of Glory," so also does it "come forth in the Ankh"—literally, "in the Mountain of life." As a figure of the sun-god's period of brilliance or "activity" the hieroglyph came to signify "life" generally.

3. . This sign for the "upper face" of the sun-god takes its meaning from the crescent in its position "above" , *i.e.*, the "night"-time position. Thus, in addition to its meaning as "the upper region" the sign also denotes "obscurity," "concealment," and "night."

To show the relation of above and below ("night and day"), the artists often placed the sign over the cleft peak , so that together the two images present an *enclosure*, signifying the full circle of the Aten.

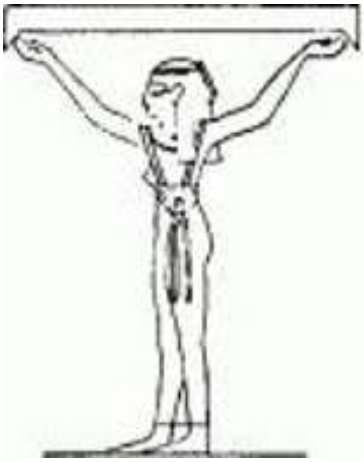


Figure 152. Together, the "above" and the "below" (the upraised arms) form the enclosure of "the above and below."

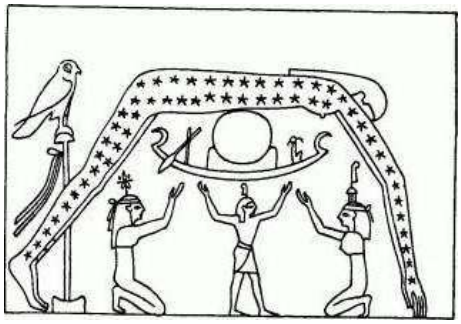


Figure 153. Nut, the Above, held aloft by Shu. (Arms of Shu=ship=twin peaks as figures of the Below).

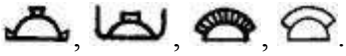
4. , , , , . Upraised arms, in Egyptian symbolism, signify the crescent "below" , and thus possess the full range of meanings associated with Saturn's "day." The Ka-arms, commonly shown supporting the Aten, convey the sense of "life," "coming forth," "support," and "masculine power" ("below"="male principle"). The sign (or) denotes "living Re," while the sign carries the interrelated meanings "to support," "to celebrate."

But numerous illustrations also show the Ka-arms embracing the Aten from *above* (figs. 113, 114). Here they denote "the upper region," the region of the "night." Hence the related signs and (inverted) arms mean "cessation," "absence," "negation," and completion."

5. . In illustrations of the daily cycle, these signs of the "upper region" (corresponding to the crescent above) are interchangeable with the image of the inverted cleft peak . They mean "hidden," "concealed," and by extension, "mysterious," "secret."

(Concerning the sign , however, an additional significance deserves consideration. The twofold enclosure, or circle of the cosmic twins—pertaining to symmetrically related positions of the crescent—is a circle half light and half shadow. In one character, the twins simply represent the light and dark divisions, so that the inverted semicircle might represent, not the "night"-time crescent, but the *shadow* in the "day"-time configuration . It is thus highly significant that the sign , read *Khaibit*, means "shadow." As the female [upper] portion of the circle, the Khaibit comes to be conceived as the consort of the male power [lower region]. Of course, one could hardly expect the Egyptians to rigorously maintain the distinction between the "shadow" and the inverted crescent.)

6. . As earlier noted, all symbols of the Aten resting in the horns signify "coming forth" and "below." But in the sign the horns are inverted over the central sun and pillar. The sign's meaning is "concealed," "mysterious."

7.  . All of these images of the primeval "mound" depict the upper region, marked out by the crescent at the completion of the daily cycle. Thus the mound sign (or) means "to arrive (at the top)," "to complete the journey (or cycle)." Closely related is the sign , "to arrive." Generally the mound signs refer to the region of "sleep," "death," or "diminished light."

The reverse of these mound signs is suggesting the crescent in its "day"-time position. The glyph means "golden" or "brilliant."

8. . While the sign denotes the masculine power of the Cosmos (the below), the inverse image denotes the feminine (the above). When the crescent reaches the below the celestial kingdom is in "celebration." Hence the sign means "celebration," "festival of life."

Though many additional aspects of the Egyptian twofold kingdom and the related circle of "day and night" need to be explored, I cite the above simply to indicate how the Saturnian configuration can illuminate certain Egyptian images which have long remained unexplained.

Concerning the relation of the Egyptian system to the language and symbols of other nations, I offer no steadfast rule. But there is every reason to believe that certain general principles can be applied elsewhere. In ancient Sumerian thought, for example, the "Cosmos" is designated by the term *an-ki.* (Jensen renders the word as "the All.")1613 The most common translation of *an-ki* is "heaven and earth." But the symbol of "the All" is , and the *literal* meaning of *an-ki* is "above and below," suggesting a noteworthy parallel with the Egyptian circle of *pet-ta.* And just as the Egyptian goddess Nut forms the "circle of above and below," so does the Sumerian goddess Inanna "encompass the an-ki."

1613 *Op. cit.*, 1-3.

To unravel the symbolism of the dual kingdom, or of the quartered kingdom, the first requirement is to put aside prevailing geographical interpretations. The language originated in connection with the celestial dwelling. In the original imagery the phrase “heaven and earth” is meaningless. There is no “north,” “south,” “east,” or “west,” There is simply the above and below, the left and right, the regions of coming forth and declining. As to the capacity of this principle to resolve numerous enigmas of ancient speech I have no doubt.

XI: Conclusion

In the foregoing pages I have attempted to show that the oldest motifs of ritual and myth focus on a coherent set of ideas—and that these ideas bear no relationship to the present world order. What modern man views as creations of a fragmented and irrational imagination actually pertain to a vision of exceptional simplicity. The Cyclopes, dragons, and one-legged giants speak not for unconstrained speculation, but for once visible powers.

To modern writers, seeking to penetrate the language of myth, it is as if early races contrived their fantastic symbolism in conscious disdain for later efforts to understand. "Anyone who has ever entered the labyrinth of an archaic culture's mythical compendia (the *Pyramid Texts*, the *Vedas*, the *Theogony*) can testify to a desperate suspicion that there is no thread of objective reality," confessed one classicist. Such a suspicion is difficult to dispel in the face of such "primitive" imagery as golden mountains reaching heaven, revolving islands and temples, winged goddesses, cosmic bulls, circular serpents, and descending rivers of fire. Mythologists quickly despair of rational explanation.

But it is the thesis of this book that the confusion results chiefly from the failure of the modern age to discern the underlying cosmic order to which the myths refer. Our reconstruction of this order includes the following elements:

1. In the earliest age recalled by man the planet Saturn was the dominant celestial body. Ancient races the world over record that there was once a "Golden Age"—a kingdom of cosmic harmony ruled by a central light god. Numerous sources identify this light god as the planet Saturn.

2. Accounts of Saturn's appearance suggest that the planet hung ominously close to the earth. In early ritual and astronomy Saturn appears as the "primeval sun," described as a figure of "terrifying splendour." Today, Saturn appears as a bare speck of light following the same visual path as the solar orb. But during the legendary Golden Age, Saturn stood in the north. Legends from every continent depict the primeval sun as an immense, fiery globe at the north celestial pole—the visual pivot of the heavens. Unlike the rising and setting solar orb, the primeval sun remained fixed in one place.

3. The modern age has misread the ancient accounts of "the beginning." These accounts speak of a creator, a first man, and a first king—all referring to the same cosmic figure. It is impossible to understand these accounts in any conventional sense because the ancient terminology carries meanings radically different from the modern. The legendary creator, first man, and first king was Saturn.

4. The subject of the global creation legend is a spectacular cosmic event actually witnessed by the ancients: massive quantities of cosmic debris exploded from Saturn, clouding the heavens and eventually congealing into a vast band around the planet. In mythical terms this band was Saturn's created "land" in heaven. Saturn ruled this celestial kingdom as both the Universal Monarch and Adam, the Primordial "Man."

5. The ancients drew pictures of Saturn incessantly, and these pictures will be found around the world. Ancient papyri, clay tablets, monuments, artifacts, and rock drawings consistently show a central orb surrounded by a circle. This symbol of the "enclosed sun" is the original hieroglyph for the planet Saturn.

6. Images of Saturn in his enclosure occur on every page of ancient texts. The band is Saturn's spouse, the mother goddess. But it is also his revolving temple, city, or island in heaven. It is the stationary, but ever-turning "world-wheel" recalled by almost every ancient race. Saturn wears the band as a golden girdle, collar,

or crown. He dwells in it as the pupil of the all-seeing Eye. The same band receives mythical interpretation as Saturn's throne, a receptacle of cosmic waters, and an encircling serpent.

7. Four primary streams of light appeared to radiate from Saturn, dividing the Saturnian band into quarters. The symbols of these four streams are the sun-cross and enclosed sun cross . Mythically, these are the four rivers of the lost paradise, the four winds, and the four pillars of Saturn's Cosmos. The enclosed sun-cross is thus the universal image of the "unified state" on our earth, for every terrestrial "holy land" was a copy of the *ideal* kingdom above.

8. The same records which describe Saturn's band and its four-fold division depict a pillar-like stream ascending the world axis and visually seeming to sustain Saturn's dwelling. Two primary images of this "cosmic mountain" are and . In the myths this column appears as the great god's single leg, a vertical stream of water or air (the North Wind), and the erect serpent or dragon of the deep.

9. Receiving light from the solar orb, the Saturnian band acquired a brightly illuminated crescent, which, as the earth rotated on its axis, visually revolved around Saturn each day. The light and dark portions of the band found expression in the black and white cosmic twins, while the alternating positions of the crescent produced the twins of the "right and left" or "above and below."

10. In the polar configuration the ancients saw, at once, the cleft summit of the cosmic mountain, with the central sun standing between the peaks of the right and left; the cosmic bull supporting Saturn between its horns; Saturn's crescent-ship on the mountaintop; the heaven-sustaining giant with out-stretched arms; the winged god or goddess; the plant of life; Saturn's turning sword; and the altar of the world. It was the relation of the Saturnian crescent to Saturn's period of brilliance which produced the original symbolism of the four directions and of "day and night."

In the earliest age the Saturnian configuration was the exclusive focal point of religious rites. But when Saturn's Golden Age passed away, mankind drew on all aspects of nature to commemorate his reign. The solar orb, the moon, meteorological forces, various animals, mountains and rivers—all manifest some special quality of the creator-king. And where no representative powers were available in nature, the ancients fashioned their own monuments in earth and stone.

The first requirement, then, is to distinguish between the primeval, cosmic forms on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the representative images chosen to depict those forms in ritual and myth. We must separate the *archetype* (concealed reality) from the *symbol* (analogy or representation of reality).

In examining the world of symbolism our predicament is much like that of the dwellers in Plato's allegorical cave, who can discern the nature of things only through the shadowy specters cast on the wall. Most of the cave's inhabitants take the shadows for the real world, but occasionally a wiser man recognizes that the shadows are merely the blurred image of a more coherent reality.

So it is with ancient myth and ritual. One must not confuse the shadow with its source, the symbol with the thing symbolized.

If the Egyptians came to regard the bull as sacred it was only because this animal was the natural counterpart to the Bull of Heaven, whose horns, supporting the very vault of the Cosmos, "shone like day." If the eagle was similarly venerated, this was because its expanded wings seemed to mirror a special quality of the "winged" creator, or the "winged" goddess.

The same principle applies to the symbolism of the constellations. The vital powers depicted by constellation figures date back to an era long before men began imposing anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms on star groups. But eventually the ancients sought to represent diverse aspects and traditions of the great god by sketching them out in the heavens.

Could a patternless group of stars have inspired the history of mighty Orion? Rather, the story of Orion *preceded* astrology. (In fact, Orion is widely acknowledged to be the Greek version of the Babylonian Tammuz-Ninurta, the planet Saturn.) And when priest-astronomers finally projected Orion onto the starry dome, they received only the most feeble assistance from the stellar patterns themselves.

Likewise, our sun, contrary to long-standing opinion, never inspired the idea of a "supreme god" and never produced an original myth of creation. Only in later times did the poets and historians confuse the solar orb with the great god of beginnings. But that such a confusion did occur is crucial to an understanding of the development of ancient religion. In Egypt, for example, the original ritual of the *central sun* was eventually transformed into eulogies to the solar orb; and the devotion to the celestial kingdom passed finally into a veneration of nature as a whole. (The most decisive shift occurred in the time of Akhenaten.) One could trace similar developments among numerous races, as priests, philosophers, astronomers, and more practical-minded generations became ever more preoccupied with "this world," recasting Saturnian imagery within the context of a less spectacular cosmic order.

Rather than attempt to follow the complex process here, I ask the reader to await treatment of the subject in the second volume of this work (entitled *The Cataclysm*). The fact is that the traditions reviewed in previous sections supply only the preface to the Saturnian drama. In these pages I have sought only to demonstrate the reality of Saturn's polar configuration, reserving discussion of the ultimate calamity for the subsequent volume.

Saturn's death or fall, we will discover, constituted the prototypal catastrophe, recounted by the ancients in numerous forms and elaborations. The collapse of the celestial kingdom; the world-destroying deluge; the battle with the serpent-dragon of the deep; the birth of Jupiter; the Child-Hero; the resurrection and transformation of Saturn; and Saturn's eventual departure to the distant realm—these are key elements in a story of incalculable impact on ancient imagination.

But to decipher the myths of the great catastrophe one must have clearly in mind the nature of the celestial order brought to an end with Saturn's fall. For those willing to pursue the question in an objective spirit there is the promise of dramatic discoveries about man's past.

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